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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL.

LITERARY HOURS.

LITERARY HOURS

2

OR

Sketches

CRITICAL AND NARRATIVE,

BY

NATHAN DRAKE, M. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION,

CORRECTED AND GREATLY ENLARGED.

Innocuas Amo Delicias Doctamque Quietem.

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TO THE

REV. FRANCIS DRAKE, B. D.

FELLOW OF MAUDLIN COLLEGE,

OXFORD.

DEAR SIR,

I feel peculiar satisfaction in dedicating this little work, the product of my leisure hours, of hours devoted to elegant literature during the intervals of professional study and employment, to the companion of my early years.

Accept, dear Sir, this small testimony of my friendship, my respect and esteem.

NATHAN DRAKE.

Hadleigh, Suffolk,
August, 1798.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

As the principal part of the ensuing volume consists of critical disquisition, I have endeavoured to alleviate the dryness usually attendant upon such discussion, in the opinion of a numerous class of readers, not only by the beauty and merit of the quotations selected for the purpose of elucidation, but by the introduction likewise of original tales and pieces of poetry. These I have interspersed at nearly equal distances with the view of breaking in upon that uniformity of diction and style which must necessarily be the result of long continued attention to literary subjects, and I should

hope they may contribute something towards acquiring popularity for the work, something towards mitigating the didactic and severer tone of the pages devoted to criticism.

In the present hour of difficulty and danger, when politics and finance appear so entirely to occupy the public mind, it is little to be expected that subjects of fancy and mere elegant literature should greatly excite attention, or meet with adequate support. Long however as our eyes have been now turned on scenes of turbulence and anarchy, long as we have listened with horror to the storm which has swept over Europe with such ungovernable fury, it must, I should imagine, prove highly grateful, highly soothing to the wearied mind, to occasionly repose on such topics as literature and imagination are willing to afford.

MAHARAJA

Happiness in this life certainly in a great measure depends on our facility in acquiring a taste for innocent and easily procurable pleasures. He who possesses therefore a relish for literature and science, will seldom complain of the tediousness and protraction of time, but may in general affirm with a celebrated writer, that, excluding pain and sickness, "with books no day has been so dark as not to have its pleasure." †

To the composition of the following papers, whatever may be their fate as to literary merit, the author, conscious that they contain no sentiment inimical to virtue or to religion, can, with sincerity, say, he is indebted for much consolatory employment; that he has found in their formation a refuge from anxiety

† Aikin.

and disappointment, and has been taught, by experience, to think, that, surrounded as we all are with ever varying accidents and calamities, hours thus spent should be esteemed as

> Sunny islands in a stormy main,
> As spots of azure in a cloudy sky.*
>
> SCOTT.

* Six of the following papers were published about eight years ago in a periodical paper. These however have now undergone very considerable additions and alterations.

Advertisement

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

In this edition many of the former numbers have been corrected and enlarged, and nine new ones have been added. An index also of those authors and artists upon whose productions any comment or criticism has been passed, is annexed to the second volume, and will, the author hopes, prove useful as an aid to reference.

Hadleigh, Suffolk,
April, 1800.

ERRATA.—VOL. I.

Page 28,	line 4,	for *copore*,	read, *corpore*.
—— —	— 5,	— *obstroque*,	—— *ostroque*.
—— 75,	— 26,	— *sooth*,	—— *sooths*.
—— 232,	— 13,	— *bossom*,	—— *bosom*.
—— 338,	— 19,	— *navite*,	—— *naïveté*.
—— 381,	— 16,	— *Then*,	—— *Thou*.
—— 452,	— 1,	— *ordours*,	—— *odours*.

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Literary Hours.

NUMBER I.

Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucretî
Exitio Terras cum dabit una Dies.*
OVID.

THIS prediction of Ovid, with regard to the durability of the Poems of Lucretius, was in eminent danger of being compleatly overthrown through the barbarism of modern Europe. Lucretius had, for several centuries, disappeared, and had entirely escaped the researches of the few who were interested in the preservation of ancient literature, until the commencement of the fifteenth century, when the

* This second line of my motto is a verbal copy from Lucretius, and in thus using the very phraseology of the philosophic poet, Ovid appears to have thought that the intrinsic merit of this tribute of respect would be doubled. Lucretius in lib. v. 93, 96, thus expresses himself:

——terras——
Una dies dabit exitio.

philosophic poet was restored to the admiration of the world through the indefatigable perseverance of Poggio Bracciolini. A history of the discovery of ancient manuscripts has been frequently mentioned as a work that would prove highly interesting to the scholar and the man of taste; and, in such a volume, Poggio would merit every encomium which gratitude could furnish. It is from the following lines in a latin elegy by Christoforo Landino, on the death of this celebrated ornament of his age, that we learn where to pay our acknowledgements for the first of philosophic poems. Landino, recording the discoveries of his friend, exclaims

Illius—manu nobis, doctissime rhetor,
  Integer in Latium, Quintiliane, redis;
Illius atque manu, divina poemata Sili
  Italici redeunt, usque legenda suis:
Et ne nos lateat variorum cultus agrorum,
  Ipse Columellæ grande reportat opus:
Et te, LUCRETI, longo post tempore, tandem
  Civibus et Patriæ reddit habere tuæ.

We are likewise indebted to Poggio for Plautus, parts of Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, but in rescuing from oblivion the sublime

disciple of Epicurus, he has conferred an obli gation of incalculable extent. It is astoniſhing how numerous have been the imitations, in almost every european language, of this exquisite poet, and that Virgil possessed a high relish of, and a desire to copy his beauties, every page of the Georgics affords proof.

Whether Lucretius can lay claim to perfect originality in the conception and execution of his poem, is a subject of considerable uncertainty; little of the didactic poetry of the Greeks is left, and the *Opera et Dies* of Hesiod, or the *Alieuticon* and *Cynegeticon* of Oppian, though conveying precepts in verse, can with scarce any probability be considered as furnishing a model for the philosophic genius of the Roman. That verses, however, inculcating the tenets of the different schools of philosophy existed in Greece, wants not the fullest testimony, and the poem of Empedocles on the doctrines of Pythagoras, was so celebrated for its energy and harmony, that it was publicly recited, along with the works of Homer and Hesiod, at the Olympic Games. Many, indeed, have not hesitated to avow, that the Roman Bard found his prototype in this

production of the Sicilian: but the assertion is founded merely on conjecture, and, perhaps, the whole controversy may be now deemed beyond the limit of enquiry.

We shall, therefore, consider this work of Lucretius as the earliest specimen which has descended to us of the philosophic poetry of the ancients, for though, in common with the writings of Hesiod and Oppian, it may be included under the Genus Didactic, as endeavouring to teach and instruct through the medium of versification, yet, as aspiring to develope the principles of natural and moral philosophy, it takes a higher station than any poem on Agriculture, Fishing, or Hunting can ever hope to attain. To combine the most exquisite poetry with the clashing and recondite dogmata of the grecian schools, was an arduous task, and to which very few, even in the first ranks of genius, could be supposed equal. However various and hostile may be the ideas with regard to the tenets of Lucretius, of his merit as a poet, I should imagine, there can be but one opinion. He who has acquired a just taste for sublime sentiment and luminous description, will find his highest gratification in

the perusal of his pages, nor will he hesitate to place him at the head of Roman poetry. Even Virgil, deservedly celebrated as he is for picturesque delineation, has not ſurpassed, either in design or colouring, the glowing landscapes of the elder bard. How rapturous must have been the enjoyment of the poet of Mantua in contemplating and dwelling upon the beautiful and highly finished pictures of his predecessor! What a study for intellect so congenial, so capable of emulating the excellence it delighted to admire! Numerous passages in the Georgics breathe the very spirit of Lucretius, and should the curious reader undertake the task of comparison, he would soon perceive how conscious Virgil must have been that the very words of his Master were of worth too great to be superseded. In fact, not only the imagery, but almost every epithet, in the digressional and episodic parts of this wonderful poem, is so appropriate, so imbued with a tint essential to the harmony of the whole, that, to attempt its change were to destroy the effect of the piece. The same judgment which led Virgil to study and to imitate the works of Lucretius, as models for descriptive poetry, has influenced too the poets of England, and Spenser,

Milton, Thomson and Gray, have frequently caught the manner, and copied the hues and grouping, of this enchanting artist. "The Persians," observes Dr. Warton, "distinguish the different degrees of the strength of fancy in different poets, by calling them, painters or sculptors. Lucretius, from the force of his images, should be ranked among the latter. He is, in truth, a Sculptor-Poet. His images have a bold relief."* Dropping, however, the language of a sister art, though frequently happily employed in illustrating the beauties and defects of poetry, it may be remarked, that the diction of Lucretius is peculiarly adapted to the nature of his theme; when explaining the abstruse theories of philosophy, his phraseology is uniformly plain and perspicuous, yet often possessing due dignity from the subject, and, in many instances, exhibiting an admirable specimen of simple grandeur. In his similes and episodes, the richest ornaments of style, the boldest metaphors and figures, and a construction of verse that even Virgil has not exceeded, unite to develope and

* Warton on the Writings and Genius of Pope, vol. ii. page 105.

convey a fertility, accuracy and amenity in description, a sublimity of imagination and sentiment, which no criticism can do justice to, which elicit the involuntary exclamations of rapture, and which can only be enjoyed by the enthusiasm of genius.

It must, however, be confessed, that the numerous pages devoted to the analysis of doctrines varied and profound in the extreme, will, in a poetic view, often press heavy on the patience of the reader; but, perhaps, these very passages, pure in their diction, and correctly expressed, though rigidly chastised in style, and free from all intrusive ornament, add, by the charm of contrast and variety, new graces to those parts on which embellishment has been bestowed with a more liberal hand. After luxuriously enjoying scenes lighted up by all the blaze and splendour of exalted fancy, the plain but not inelegant detail of philosophic disquisition, gives a necessary relief, and prepares the mind for the keener relish of succeeding beauties. When emerging from the intricate and eccentric mazes of elaborate disputation, what a pleasing horror thrills through the veins on the magnificent prosopo-

peia of Nature,* who, with a majesty which arrests the deepest attention, chides her ungrateful children, and upbraids their impious discontent, and with what exquisite delight we listen to the commencement and progress of the Arts,§ during which so many delicious scenes are unfolded, so many striking and impressive descriptions occur.

After this encomium on the poetry of Lucretius, it will probably be demanded, why his writings have not been more popular? why, to the generality of classical scholars, he is nearly unknown? why, whilst Virgil, Horace and Tibullus are perused with avidity, the animated effusions of this sublimest of roman bards, should lie neglected on the shelf? It may be answered, I think, that a fate so undeserved, has been occasioned by a misrepresentation of his morals, and by a puerile and injudicious dread of his philosophical tenets. The morality of Epicurus, so far from favouring the indulgence of sensuality, holds out every incentive to temperance. It is true,

* See the conclusion of the third book.

§ Book the fifth towards the end.

that he maintained all happiness to consist in pleasure, but, at the same time, taught, that genuine and durable pleasure could only arise from the cultivation of the mental powers, and the strictest attention to every social and domestic virtue. Diogenes and Galen represent this much-injured Philosopher as a person of consummate virtue, who despised the sordid cares and luxuries of life, and contemned every excess in eating, drinking, and apparel. Unfortunately for the pure fame of Epicurus, Horace, adopting the accusation which envy and calumny had conspired to broach, the very name of him who taught the purest morals, the most rigid chastity and sobriety, has become an epithet to convey the idea of every sensual and voluptuous enjoyment.

Lucretius, in conformity to the moral precepts of his Master, uses every dissuasive against vice, every incentive towards virtue. Profusion, avarice and ambition, cruelty, injustice and revenge, the disordered passions of the mind, the pampered pleasures of the body, alike require and meet his severest reprobation. The sweetest passages in his poem are employed in the delineation of rural simplicity, and

domestic happiness, of innocent and contented poverty; and, in short, the moral purport of his system may be comprised in the two following lines of one of our most pathetic poets:

Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.†

and which are, indeed, but a compressed translation of four beautiful ones in Lucretius:

——Corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus
Esse opus omninò, quæ demant quemque dolorem,
Delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint,
Gratius interdum neque Natura ipsa requirit.§

That the philosophical and religious principles of our Epicurean Bard are not so defensible as his moral, will be readily admitted. In these days, when contrasted with sound philosophy and pure religion, many of his doctrines appear baseless and absurd, but assuredly not more so than the gross mythology of Homer, Virgil and Ovid, and why we still peruse these authors with rapture, careless of their impious opinions, yet refuse to taste the

† Goldsmith's Edwin and Angelina.

§ Lib. ii, l. 20.

exquisite poetry of Lucretius because occasionally tinged with metaphysic error, is an inconsistency not easily accounted for. The idea of Epicurus, that it is the nature of the Gods, to enjoy an immortality in the bosom of perpetual peace, infinitely remote from all relation to this globe, free from care, from sorrow, and from pain, supremely happy in themselves, and neither rejoicing in the pleasures, nor concerned for the evils of humanity, though perfectly void of any rational foundation, yet possesses much moral charm, when compared with the popular religions of Greece and Rome; the felicity of their deities consisted in the vilest debauchery, nor was there a crime, however deep its dye, that had not been committed, and gloried in, by some one of their numerous objects of worship. The Immortals of Epicurus, on the other hand, are virtuous and innocent, but he has, unfortunately, exempted them from the toil of creation, and snatched the universe from their grasp. To these tenets of the Grecian, Lucretius has added the Infinite of Anaximander, and the Atomic theory of Democritus: doctrines such as these, which lead to the fortuitous formation of the world, are perfectly incapable of making

any impression upon a mind either imbued with religion, or familiar with the progress of philosophy and science. He, therefore, who should refrain from a perusal of the poet, under the apprehension of becoming a convert to his religious opinions, would, in the present period of scientific improvement, be considered as either naturally imbécile in intellect, or, verging towards a state of insanity.

Futile, however, as the data, on which the peculiar syſtem of Lucretius is built, may justly be deemed, his work abounds with a vast variety of philosophical doctrines, perhaps including every sect among the ancients. The subtile hypotheses of Epicurus, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Democritus, of Anaximander, Pythagoras, Anaximenes, Thales, Pherecydes, Aristotle and Plato, pass in review before him, and it affords some aſtonishment, and much curious speculation to the reflecting mind, that, probably, not a system of philosophy exists among the moderns, which has not had its foundation laid upon some one opinion or other of these ancient theorists, and the outlines of which may not be found in the pages of Lucretius. Even the Newtonian

doctrine of Gravitation was not unknown to our poet, for, in his first book, he attempts to refute the idea, that the universe has a centre to which all things tend by their natural gravity. That the central spot had the strongest power of attraction was equally an hypothesis of Sir Isaac Newton and the ancient Stoics.

It is not a little extraordinary, therefore, that an ancient composition, pregnant with such exquisite poetry, and unfolding such a curious mass of philosophical conception, should not have been more generally studied. Men of poetic genius, indeed, have frequently had recourse to these materials, and have drawn, from the splendid creations of the Roman, many of their most brilliant and beautiful designs, and with the greater air of originality, as the model from whence they sketched, had, comparatively, attracted but a small portion of the attention of the mere classical scholar. It is only, indeed, within these few years, that in our island, as a writer at once elegant, interesting, and sublime, Lucretius has been honoured with due notice. Dr. Warton, with much taste, pointed out many of the noble images so thickly sown throughout the poem, and the

late magnificent edition by Gilbert Wakefield, who to great critical acumen adds all that sensibility and enthusiasm so essential to a just relish of the higher beauties of poetry, together with the elegant Translation we are about to give some specimens of, will ensure the reputation, and familiarise the excellencies of our hitherto neglected Bard.

To translate with harmony and fidelity such an author as Lucretius, is an enterprise of no small difficulty, and requires the utmost command of language, not only to transfer the glowing scenery of the poem, but to transmit, with melody and precision, the diction of the schools. Few, therefore, have been the attempts, in England, to naturalize this poet, and of these few, the greater part has been pre-eminently unfortunate. Mr. Evelyn with the utmost admiration of his original, and with every wish to excel, commenced the arduous task exclaiming

> I saw a fruitful soil, by none yet trod,
> Reserv'd for heroes, or fome demi-god,
> And urg'd my fortune on——*

* Lines addressed to Mr. Creech.

but, after struggling through the first book, he relinquished the undertaking in despair. Creech, however, had more perseverance, and has given us an entire version, but so little has he preserved of the dignity, of the sublimity, and descriptive powers of the poet, that it is impossible to form any idea of the beautiful original from his coarse, and ill-executed copy. Some couplets which have merit, might be selected from the volume, and a few passages which attempt the delineation of rural ease and happiness, but take it as a whole, it is utterly deficient in one of the most striking characteristics of the Roman, grandeur and felicity of expression. Dryden has rather paraphrased than translated, and though in the small portion he has favoured us with, his versification be, as usual, spirited and easy, it wants the majesty and solemn colouring of Lucretius; and towards the conclusion of the fourth book he is more licentious, broad and open, than the text, faulty as it undoubtedly is, in this respect, will warrant. Toward the middle of the last century, a version in prose was published, together with the original, and with plates, engraved by Guernier: it is evident that an attempt of this kind can have few pre-

tensions to any other merit than that which arises from a literal adherence to the sense of the original; in this view, it appears not to be deficient, and, as Lucretius, from the nature of his subject, is, occasionally, intricate, may have its use.

These being the only efforts hitherto made to clothe in a British dress the first, perhaps, of Roman Poets, a translation, which to elegance and energy of diction, should add the charms of versification, and a fidelity as well with regard to the manner, as matter of the poet, has become a desideratum in english literature, and I feel peculiar pleasure in being able to inform the literary world that a version, which appears to me, as far as I am able to estimate its merits, fully capable of supplying the deficiency, is in preparation for the public. Mr. Good, of London,* has, for some years, devoted his leisure hours to this elaborate undertaking, and, if friendship hath not biassed my judgment, with the happiest success. That my readers, however, may be enabled to form an opinion for themselves, I shall place before

* Caroline Place, Guildford Street.

them some extracts from the different books, accompanied by the original, and as these have not been selected from any preference discoverable in their translation, they may be considered as a fair specimen of the whole.

The Sacrifice of Iphigenia is a picture of high rank in the gallery of the poet, and demands our notice. Lucretius, after celebrating the genius of Epicurus whose doctrine first put to flight the terrors of superstition, thus proceeds:

Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
Impia te rationis inire elementa, viamque
Endogredi sceleris: Quod contra, sæpius olim
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta,
Aulide quo pacto Triviaï virginis aram
Iphianassaï turpârunt sanguine fœde
Ductores Danaûm, delecti, prima virorum.
Cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus
Ex utraque pari malarum parte profusa 'st,
Et mæstum simul ante aras adstare parentem
Sensit, et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros;
Aspectuque suo lacrymas effundere civeis;
Muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat;
Nec miseræ prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
Quod patrio princeps donârat nomine regem.
Nam sublata virûm manibus tremabundaque ad aras

Deducta 'st, non ut, solenni more sacrorum
Perfecto, posset claro comitari Hymenæo:
Sed casta inceste nubendi tempore in ipso
Hostia concideret mactatu mæsta parentis,
Exitus ut classi felix, faustusque daretur
Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.
Lib. i. l. 81.

Nor deem the truths Philosophy reveals
Corrupt the mind, or prompt to impious deeds.
No: Superstition may, and nought so soon,
But Wisdom never. Superstition 'twas
Urg'd the fell Grecian chiefs with virgin blood
To stain the virgin altar:—barb'rous deed,
And fatal to their laurels! Aulis saw,
For there Diana reigns, th' unholy rite.
Around she look'd, the pride of Grecian maids,
The lovely Iphigenia,—round she look'd,
The sacred fillet o'er her tresses tied,
And sought in vain protection. *She survey'd*
Near her her weeping sire, a band of priests
Repentant half, and hiding the keen steel;
And crowds of citizens and damsels pale
Fixt in each tragic attitude of woe.
Dumb with alarm, with supplicating knee,
And lifted eye, she sought compassion still,
Fruitless and unavailing!—Vain her youth,
Her innocence and beauty: vain the boast
Of regal birth; and vain that first herself
Lisp'd the dear name of father, eldest born,

Forc'd from her suppliant posture, straight she ſaw
The altar full prepar'd: not there to blend
Connubial vows, and light the bridal torch;
But at the moment, when mature in charms,
While Hymen call'd aloud, to fall, e'en then,
A father's victim, and the price to pay
Of Grecian navies favour'd thus with gales.—
Such are the crimes that Superstition prompts!

The lines in Italics, both in the original and translation, are equally pathetic and strong.

Some of the most pleasing passages in Lucretius are those in which he commemorates his poetical and philosophical predecessors; the two ensuing extracts have immortalized Ennius and Empedocles: they are written with all the enthusiasm of admiration, and glow with warmth and beauty. I cannot forbear too, expressing a high sense of the merits of the version which is given *con amore*, with a felicity, indeed, that leaves little to wish for.

Ignoratur enim quæ sit natura animaï,
Nata sit, an, contra, nascentibus insinuetur,
Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta,
An tenebras Orci visat, vastasque lacunas,
An pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,

Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amæno
Detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
Per genteis Italas hominum quæ clara clueret,
Et si præterea tamen esse Acherusia templa
Ennius æternis exponit versibus, edens:
Quo neque permanent animæ, neque corpora nostra;
Sed quædam simulacra modis pallentia miris
Unde sibi exortam semper-florentis Homeri
Commemorat speciem, lacrumas et fundere salsas
Cœpisse, et rerum naturam expandere dictis.
Lib. i. 113.

Yet doubtful is the doctrine, and unknown
Whether, coeval with th' external frame,
The soul first lives when lives the body first,
Or boasts a date anterior: whether doom'd
To common ruin and one common grave,
Or thro' the gloomy shades, the lakes, the caves
Of Erebus to wander: or, perchance,
As *Ennius* taught, immortal Bard! whose brows
Unfading laurels bound, and still whose verse
All Rome recites entranc'd, perchance condem'd
The various tribes of brutes, with ray divine,
To animate and quicken: tho' the bard,
In deathless melody has elsewhere sung
Of Acherusian temples, where nor soul
Nor body dwells, but images of men
Mysterious shap'd, in wond'rous measure wan.
Here Homer's spectre roam'd, of endless fame

Possest: his briny tears the bard survey'd,
And drank the dulcet precepts from his lips.

Quorum Acragantinus cum primis *Empedocles* est:
Insula quem Triquetris terrarum gessit in oris:
Quam fluitans circum magnis amfractibus æquor
Ionium glaucis aspergit virus ab undis:
Angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Italiæ terraï oras á finibus ejus:
Hîc est vasta Charybdis, et hîc Ætnæa minantur
Murmura flammarum rursum se conligere iras,
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evomat igneis:
Ad cœlumque ferat flammaï fulgura rursum;
Quæ cùm magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visendaque fertur,
Rebus opima bonis, multa munita virûm vi:
Nil tamen hoc habuisse viro præclarius in se,
Nec sanctum magis, et mirum, carumque videtur.
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, et exponunt præ clara reperta;
Ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

Lib. i. 717.

Thus sung *Empedocles*—in honest fame
First of his sect; whom Agrigentum bore
In cloud-capt Sicily. Its sinuous shores
Th' Ionian main, with hoarse, unwearied wave
Surrounds, and sprinkles with its briny dew:
And, from the fair Italian fields, divides

With narrow frith that spurns th' impetuous surge.
Here vast Charybdis raves: here Etna rears
His infant thunders, his dread jaws unlocks,
And heaven, and earth with fiery ruin threats.
Here many a wonder, many a scene sublime,
As on he journeys, checks the traveller's steps;
And shews, at once, a land in harvests rich,
And rich in sages of illustrious fame.
But nought so wond'rous, so illustrious nought,
So fair, so pure, so lovely, can it boast,
Empedocles, as thou! whose song divine,
By all rehears'd, so clears each mystic lore,
That scarce mankind believ'd thee born of man.

So numerous are the passages in which the descriptive powers of our poet are called forth, that the task of selection becomes difficult. I have chosen, however, a couple of scenes whose leading features are perfectly opposed, the first displaying the utmost sweetness, amenity, and repose, the second the turbulence and fury of elemental war.

———pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater Æther
In gremium matris Terraï precipitavit;
At nitidæ surgunt fruges, ramique virescunt
Arboribus; crescunt ipsæ, fœtuque gravantur:
Hinc alitur porro nostrum genus, atque ferarum:

Hinc lætas urbeis pueris florere videmus,
Frundiferasque novis avibus canere undique sylvas,
Hinc fessæ pecudes pingues per pabula lœta
Corpora deponunt, et candens lacteus humor
Uberibus manat distentis; hinc nova proles
Artubus infirmis teneras lascivaper herbas
Ludit, lacte mero menteis percussa novellas.
Lib. i. 251.

When on the bosom of maternal earth,
His showers redundant genial Ether pours,
The dulcet drops seem lost: but harvests rise
Jocund and lovely; and with foliage fresh,
Smiles every tree, and bends beneath it's fruit.
Hence man, and beast are nourish'd: hence o'erflow
Our joyous streets with crowds of frolic youth,
And with fresh songs th' umbrageous groves resound.
Hence the herds fatten, and repose at ease,
O'er the gay meadows, their unweildy forms;
While from each full-distended udder drops
The frequent milk spontaneous: and hence, too,
Fed from the same pure fount, their own wild young.
With tottering footsteps, print the tender grass,
Joyous at heart, unwearied in their sport.

The *artubus infirmis* in the above quotation throw forcibly on the eye a minute but very natural and pleasing circumstance, and which has escaped the attention of every preceding

english translator. Mr. Good has well preserved the beauty of the image

With *tottering footsteps* print the tender grass.

In the nervous lines which follow, and which breathe the inexorable spirit of the storm they describe, the powers of the poet have been exerted with peculiar energy.

———Venti vis verberat incita pontum,
Ingenteisque ruit naveis, et nubila differt:
Interdum rapido percurrens turbine campos
Arboribus magnis sternit, monteisque supremos
Silvifragis vexat flabris: ita perfurit acri
Cum fremitu, sœvitque minaci murmure pontus.
Sunt igitur Venti nimirum corpora cœca,
Quæ mare, quæ terras, quæ denique nubila cœli
Verrunt, ac subito vexantia turbine raptant.
Nec ratione fluunt alia, stratagemque propagant
Ac cum mollis aquæ fertur natura repente
Flumine abundanti, quod largis imbribus auget
Montibus ex altis magnus decursus aquaï:
Fragmina conjiciens sylvarum, arbustaque tota;
Nec validi possunt pontes venientes aquaï
Vim subitam tolerare: ita magno turbidus imbri
Molibus incurrens validis cum viribus amnis
Dat sonitu magno stragem; volvitque sub undis
Grandia saxa, ruit quà quidquid fluctibus obstat.

Sic igitur debent Venti quoque flamina ferri:
Quæ, veluti validum flumen, cum procubuere
Quamlibet in partem, trudunt res ante, ruuntque
Impetibus crebris; interdum vertice torto
Corripiunt, rapidoque rotantia turbine portant.
Lib. i. 272

————Th' excited wind torments the deep,
Wrecks the tough bark, and tears the shiv'ring clouds.
Now, with wide whirlwind, prostrating alike,
O'er the waste champain, trees, and bending blade:
And now, perchance, with forest-rending force,
Rocking the mighty mountains on their base:
So vast it's fury!—But that fury flows
Alone from viewless atoms, that combin'd,
Thus form the fierce tornado raging wild
O'er heaven, and earth, and ocean's dread domain.
As when a river, down it's verdant banks
Soft-gliding, sudden from the mountain round
Swells with the rushing rain—the placid stream
All limit loses; and, with furious force,
In its resistless tide, bears down, at once,
Shrubs, shattered trees, and bridges———
Loud roars the raging flood, and triumphs still,
O'er rocks, and mounds, and all that else contends.
So roars th' enraged wind: so, like a flood,
Where'er it aims, before its mighty tide,
Sweeps all created things: or, round, and round,
In its vast vortex curls their tortur'd forms.

It has ever been a custom, among the votaries of the Muses, to conceive themselves as under the influence of inspiration, and to address the supposed dispenser of their poetic energies, in strains the most musical and choice. Lucretius has not deviated from the established form, but, in grateful, and rapturous language, frequently acknowledges the powerful impulse, and boasts the enjoyment of a theme untouched by any of the tuneful train.

Nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura, sed acri
Percussit thyrso Laudis spes magna meum cor,
Et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem
Musarum: quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti
Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo: juvat integros accedere fonteis,
Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores:
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
Unde prius nulli velârunt tempora Musæ.

Lib. i. 921.

Obscure the subject, but the thirst of fame
Burns all my bosom; and thro' every nerve
Darts the proud love of letters, and the muse.
I feel the inspiring power; and roam resolv'd
Thro' paths Pierian never trod before.
Sweet are the springing founts with nectar new;

Sweet the new flowers that bloom; but sweeter still
Those flowers to pluck, and weave a roseat wreath
The Muses yet to mortals ne'er have deign'd.

One of the most beautiful and pleasing features in the poetry of Lucretius is, the pure and self-denying morality which pervades almost every page. The opening of the second book is, in fact, a declamation on the vanity of all sublunary things, and the lines immediately succeeding, and which are taken from this introduction, place in the clearest point of view the futility of luxury and wealth, and display the warmest attachment and sensibility to the charms of simple and unsophisticated nature. It is a passage, among a multitude to be found in the poem, which, combining the most exalted poetry with the chastest precepts of virtue, has attracted admirers and imitators in every european nation.

Si non aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ædeis
Lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
Lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
Nec domus argento fulget, auroque renidet;
Nec citharis reboant laqueata aurataque templa:
Attamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
Propter aquæ rivum, sub ramis arboris altæ,

Non magnis opibus jucundè corpora curant:
Præsertim cum tempestas arridet, et anni
Tempora conspergunt viridanteis floribus herbas,
Nec calidæ citiùs decedunt copore febres
Textilibus si in picturis, obstroque rubenti
Jactaris, quam si plebeia in veste cubandu 'st.
Lib, ii. 24.

What tho' the dome be wanting, whose proud walls
A thousand lamps irradiate, propt sublime
By frolic forms of youth, in massy gold,
Flinging their splendours o'er the midnight feast:
Tho' gold, and silver blaze not o'er the board,
Nor music echo round the gaudy roof:—
Yet listless laid the verdant grass along
Near gliding streams, by shadowy trees o'er-arch'd,
Such pomps we need not: such still less when spring
Leads forth her laughing train; and the warm year
Paints the green meads with roseat flowers profuse.
On down reclin'd, or wrapt in purple robe,
The thirsty fever burns with heat as fierce
As when its victim lingers in a cot.

Virgil in his Georgics, and Thomson in his Seasons, have imitated this delightful piece of moral scenery. No attempt, however, to copy the admirable original has succeeded better, perhaps, than the following by Lorenzo de Medici.

Cerchi chi vuol, le pompe, e gli alti honori,
Le piazze, e tempii, e gli edificii magni,
Le delicie, il tesor, qual accompagni
Mille duri pensier, mille dolori :
Un verde praticel pien di bei fiori,
Un rivolo, che l'herba intorno bagni,
Un augelletto, che d'amor si lagni,
Acqueta molto meglio i nostri ardori:
L'ombrose selve, i sassi, e gli alti monti,
Gli antri oscuri e le fere fuggitive,
. . . .
Quivi veggo io con pensier vaghi ;
. . . .
Qui me le toglie hor una, hor altra cosa.

Seek he who will in grandeur to be blest,
Place in proud halls, and splendid courts his joy ;
For pleasure, or for gold, his arts employ,
Whilst all his hours unnumbered cares molest.
A little field in native flow'rets drest,
A rivulet in soft murmurs gliding by,
A bird whose love-sick note salutes the sky,
With sweeter magic lull my cares to rest.
And shadowy woods, and rocks, and towering hills,
And caves obscure, and nature's free-born train
. . . .
Each in my mind some gentle thought instills;
. . . .
Ah gentle thoughts! soon lost the city cares among.

ROSCOE.

The

Attamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
Propter aquæ rivum sub ramis arboris altæ

of the poet, bring strongly to recollection two exquisite morsels in Gray:

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink,
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
At ease reclin'd———

There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

Many passages which powerfully appeal to the heart, and which may, indeed, be esteemed very striking instances of the pathetic, Lucretius has interspersed through his poem, and with one or two of these I shall decorate my pages. The lines which follow have been imitated by Spenser in his Fairy Queen.

Nec ratione alia Proles cognoscere Matrem,
Nec Mater posset Prolem: quod posse videmus,

Nec minùs atque homines inter se nota cluere.
Nam sæpe ante Deûm vitulus delubra decora
Turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras,
Sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen,
At mater virideis saltus orbata peragrans,
Linquit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,
Omnia convisens oculis loca, si queat usquam
Conspicere amissum Fætum: completque querelis
Frundiferum nemus adsistens; et crebra revisit
Ad stabulum, desiderio perfixa Juvenci:
Nec teneræ salices, atque herbæ rore vigentes,
Fluminaque ulla queunt summis labentia ripis,
Oblectare animum, subitamque avertere curam:
Nec Vitulorum aliæ species per pabula læta
Derivare queunt aliò, curaque levare:
Usque adeo quiddam proprium, notumque requirit.

Lib. ii. 349.

————————————hence alone,
Hence the fond mother knows her tender young,
The tender young their mother: 'midst the brutes
As clear discern'd, as man's sublimer race.—
Thus oft, before the sacred shrine, perfum'd
With spires of frankincense, th' unweeting calf
Pours, o'er the altar, from his breast profound,
The purple flood of life: but, wand'ring wild
O'er the green sward, the plaintive dam bereft
Beats, with her hoof, the deep-indented dale;
Each spot exploring, if, perchance, she still

May trace her idol: thro' th' umbrageous grove
With well-known voice she moans, and oft re-seeks,
Urg'd by a mother's love, th' accustom'd stall.
Nor shade for her, nor dew-distended grass,
Nor stream soft-gliding down its banks abrupt,
Yield aught of solace; or the carking care
Avert that preys within: nor the gay young
Of others soothe her o'er the joyous green.—
So deep she longs, so lingers for her own.

Descriptions of this kind impress us with a very favourable idea of the tenderness and humanity of the poet. What can more deliciously paint the ardours of domestic affection than the ensuing lines:

At jam non domus accipiet te læta; neque uxor
Optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
Præripere, et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
Lib. iii. 907.

They have not escaped the pathetic Virgil:

Interea dulces pendent circum oscula nati.
Geo. ii. 523.

and the elegiac Muse of Gray has imbibed the very spirit of the Roman:

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Thomson has thus depicted circumstances of a congenial nature:

In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing and the vestment warm:
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home.

Winter, 311.

NUMBER II.

———————————— Lucretius ——
Doctrina solers idem, clarusque Poeta,
Antiqui vatis reparat solennia jura.
Huic, simul ac rerum Primordia pandere tentat,
Naturamque Deûm, flammantia mænia mundi
Extra et procedit, Musarum captus amore,
Ipsa Venus, votis blanda, arridere videtur,
Nympharumque Chorus; tantus lepor insinuat se
Verbis, tanta viri est celebris vis insita menti.

DYER.

As a considerable portion of the poem De Rerum Natura is occupied in the detail of argument, and the display of various and contending doctrines, it may be deemed necessary to adduce a specimen or two of the pure didactic style and manner of Lucretius, and of the success which has attended his Translator in this, perhaps his most difficult and laborious,

department.* Independent of perspicuity of arrangement and harmony of verse, Lucretius has rendered the most abstruse passages in his work pleasing from the peculiar propriety of his expression, and the beauty of his metaphors; these excellencies have, in my opinion, been transferred with singular felicity to the english version, and the extracts I have now to bring forward, will probably induce the reader to concur in the encomium.

Some philosophers of the present day have, with no little extravagance, inferred the perfectibility of human nature; they have even gone so far as to assert that the physical consequences of our existence, sleep and death, are no necessary result, but the effects of our own ignorance, and of acquired imbecillity; that as reason and knowledge advance, the agency of volition will be unlimited, and that ultimately the corporeal functions will be rendered completely subservient to the powers of intellect.

* The Monthly Reviewer, to whom I am indebted for an elaborate and candid critique on the first edition of the Literary Hours, being of opinion that a specimen of the translation should have been drawn from the more abstruse parts of Lucretius, I have in this paper carried his suggestion into execution.

Lucretius has wisely rejected this day-dream of philosophy, for, though he appear to believe that man may by his own efforts approach toward perfection, and emulate the gods in happiness, yet he has taken care to qualify this opinion by affirming that the seeds of vice and imperfection cannot be altogether eradicated; that man, in fact, cannot shake off the imbecillities incident to materiality, nor can he annihilate those passions which the deity has, for wise purposes, attached to our system.

Sic Hominum genus est: quamvis Doctrina politos
Constituat pariter quosdam, tamen illa relinquit
Naturæ cujusque Animæ vestigia prima.
Nec radicitùs evelli mala posse putandum 'st,
Quin proclivius Hic iras decurrat ad acreis;
Ille metu citiùs paullo tentetur: at Ille
Tertius accipiat quædam clementiùs æquo.
Inque aliis rebus multis differre necesse 'st
Naturas hominum varias, moresque sequaceis:
Quorum ego nunc nequeo cæcas exponere causas,
Nec reperire figurarum tot nomina, quot sunt
Principiis, unde hæc oritur variantia rerum.
Illud in his rebus videor firmare potesse,
Usque adeo Naturarum vestigia linqui
Parvola, quæ nequeat Ratio depellere dictis:
Ut nihil impediat dignam Diis degere vitam.

Lib. iii. 308.

Thus varies man: tho' education oft
Add its bland polish, frequent still we trace
The first deep print of nature on the soul,
Nor aught can all-erase it. Hence, thro' time,
This yields to sudden rage, to terror that,
While oft a third beyond all right betrays
A heart of mercy. Thus in various modes,
The moral temper, and symphoneous life
Must differ; thus from many a cause occult
The sage can ne'er resolve, nor human speech
Find phrase to explain; so boundless, so complex
The primal sources whence the variance flows!
Yet this the Muse may dictate, that so few
The native traces wisdom ne'er can rase
Man still may emulate the gods in bliss.

The doctrine of Pyrrho which inculcates perfect scepticism, and discredits even the testimony of the senses, Lucretius held in utter and deserved contempt, and in the following passage he has in a striking manner laid open the absurdity of his tenets. It is a lesson still applicable at the commencement of the nineteenth century, and may with equal propriety be addressed to the disciples of Berkley and of Hume, for he who denies the existence of matter, must in almost every instance disbelieve the evidence of sense.

Denique, nil sciri siquis putat, id quoque nescit,
An sciri possit, quoniam nihil scire fatetur:
Hunc igitur contra mittam contendere causam,
Qui capite ipse suo in statuit vestigia sese.
Et tamen hoc quoque uti concedam, scire, at id ipsum
Quæram, quom in rebus veri nil viderit antè,
Unde sciat, quid sit scire, et nescire vicissim:
Notitiam veri quæ res, falsique creârit;
Et dubium certo quæ res differre probârit?
Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
Notitiam veri, neque sensus posse refelli:
Nam majore fide debet reperirier illud,
Sponte sua veris quod possit vincere falsa.
Quid majore fide porro, quàm sensus haberi
Debet? An ab sensu falso ratio orta valebit
Dicere eos contra, quæ tota ab sensibus orta 'st?
Qui nisi sint veri, ratio quoque falsa fit omnis,
An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere? an aureis
Tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris?
An confutabunt nares, oculive revincent?
Non (ut opinor) ita 'st: Nam seorsum quoique potestas
Divisa 'st: sua vis quoique 'st: ideoque necesse 'st,
Et, quod molle sit, et gelidum, fervensque videri;
Et seorusm varios rerum sentire colores,
Et quæcunque coloribu' sunt conjuncta, necesse 'st.
Seorsus item sapor oris habet vim, seorsus odores
Nascuntur, seorsum sonitus: ideoque necesse 'st,

Non possint alios alii convincere sensus.
Nec porro poterunt ipsi reprendere sese,
Æqua fides quoniam debebit semper haberi.
Proinde, quod in quoque 'st his visum tempore, verum 'st.
Lib. iv. 471.

Who holds that nought is known, denies he knows
E'en this, thus owning that he nothing knows.
With such I ne'er could reason, who, with face
Retorted, treads the ground just trod before.
Yet grant e'en this he knows, since nought exists
Of truth in things, whence learns he what to know,
Or what not know? what things can give him first
The notion crude of what is false or true?
What prove aught doubtful, or of doubt devoid?
Search, and this earliest notion thou wilt find
Of truth and falsehood, from the senses drawn;
Nor aught can e'er refute them: for what once,
By truths opposed, their falsehood can detect,
Must claim a trust far ampler than themselves.
Yet what than these an ampler trust can claim?
Can reason, born forsooth of erring sense,
Impeach those senses whence alone it springs?
And, which if false, itself can ne'er be true?
Can sight correct the ears? can ears the touch?
Or touch the tongue's fine flavour? or, o'er all,
Can smell triumphant rise? absurd the thought.
For every sense a separate function boasts,
A power prescribed; and hence or soft, or hard,

Or hot or cold, to its appropriate sense
Alone appeals. The gaudy train of hues,
With their light shades, appropriate thus alike
Perceive we; tastes appropriate powers possess;
Appropriate, sounds and odours; and hence, too,
One sense another ne'er can contravene,
Nor e'en correct itself; since every hour,
In every act, each claims an equal faith;
So what the senses notice must be true.

It being my intention to quote from the sixth book some lines descriptive of a disease the most dreadful that afflicts humanity, I have chosen on an intervening page, and with a view to gratify the mind by the charm of contrast, as well as to evince the exquisite beauty of the original and translation, to present a picture taken from the conclusion of the fifth book, where the poet is expatiating on the origin of man, and on the progress of the useful and elegant arts. It is a design which has all that amenity of conception, harmony of colouring and delicacy of finish which distinguish the pencil of Albani.

At specimen sationis, et insitionis origo
Ipsa fuit rerum primùm Natura creatrix.
Arboribus quoniam baccæ, glandesque caducæ
Tempestiva dabant pullorum examina subter.

Unde etiam libitum 'st stirpeis committere ramis:
Et nova defodere in terram virgulta per agros:
Inde aliam, atque aliam culturam dulcis agelli
Tentabant, fructusque feros mansuescere terra
Cernebant indulgendo, blandèque colendo.
Inque dies magis in montem succedere sylvas
Cogebant, infraque locum concedere cultis:
Prata, lacus, rivos, segetes, vinetaque læta
Collibus, et campis ut haberent, atque olearum
Cærula distinguens inter plaga currere posset
Per tumulos, et convalleis, camposque profusa:
Ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore
Omnia, quæ pomis intersita dulcibus ornant:
Arbustisque tenent felicibus obsita circùm.
At liquidas avium voces imitarier ore
Antè fuit multo, quàm lævia carmina cantu
Concelebrare homines possent, aureisque juvare.
Et Zephyri cava per calamorum sibila primum
Agresteis docuere cavas inflare cicutas,
Inde minutatim dulceis didicere querelas,
Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
Avia per nemora, ac sylvas saltusque reperta,
Per loca pastorum deserta, atque otia dia:
Sic unum quicquid paullatim protrahit ætas
In medium, ratioque in luminis eruit oras.

Lib. v. 1360.

But nature's self the race of man first taught
To sow, to graft; for acorns ripe they saw,
And purple berries, shattered from the trees,
Soon yield a lineage like the trees themselves.

Whence learn'd they, curious, thro' the stem mature
To thrust the tender slip, and o'er the soil
Plant the fresh shoots that first disorder'd sprang.
Then, too, new cultures tried they, and, with joy,
Mark'd the boon earth, by ceaseless care caress'd,
Each vagrant fruitage sweeten, and enlarge.
So loftier still, and loftier, up the hills
Drove they the woodlands daily, broadening thus
The cultur'd landscape, that the sight might trace
Meads, corn-fields, rivers, lakes and vineyards gay,
O'er hills and mountains thrown; while wound below
The purple scene of olives; as ourselves
Still o'er the grounds mark every graceful hue
Where blooms the dulcet apple, and around
Trees of like lustre spread their loaded arms.
  And from the liquid warblings of the birds
Learn'd they their first rude notes, ere music yet
To the rapt ear had tun'd the measur'd verse;
And zephyr, whispering thro' the hollow reeds,
Taught the first swains the hollow reeds to sound:
Whence woke they soon those tender-trembling tones
Which the sweet pipe, when by the fingers prest,
Pours o'er the hills, the vales, and woodlands wild,
Haunts of lone Shepherds and the rural gods.
So growing time points, ceaseless, something new,
And human skill evolves it into day.

The ravages of the plague, and the symptoms of fever form subjects little calculated for the decorations of the Muse, yet has Lucretius, by the magic of his poetry, rendered a

description peculiarly susceptible of horror and disgust, productive of emotions the most sublime and pathetic. Thucydides had with great accuracy furnished the facts, being himself not only a spectator of, but a sufferer under this dreadful calamity. To the elegant and faithful detail of the Historian the Roman Bard has added all that was necessary to convert the description into pure poetry. Than the prosopopæia of Medicine,

——mussabat tacito Medecina timore,

what can be more striking and terrific, and the external symptoms of approaching dissolution, the facies Hippocratica, are depicted with equal harmony, fidelity and spirit. A small portion of this admirable description, for to insert the whole would occupy too much space in a work of this kind, will convey no inadequate idea of the general merits of the episode.

Hæc ratio quondam morborum, et mortiferæ vis
Finibus in Cecropiis funestos reddidit agros,
Vastavitque vias, exhausit civibus urbem.
Nam penitus veniens Ægypti è finibus ortus,
Aëra permensus multum, camposque; natanteis,
Incubuit tandem populum Pandionis omnem.
Inde catervatim morbo mortique dabantur.
Principiò, caput incensum fervore gerebant:
Et dupliceis oculos suffusa luce rubenteis.

Sudabant etiam fauces, intrinsecus atræ,
Sanguine, et ulceribus vocis via septa coibat;
Atque animi interpres manabat lingua cruore,
Debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu.
Nec requies erat ulla mali, defessa jacebant
Corpora, mussabat tacito Medecina timore,
Quippe patentia quom totiens, ardentia morbis,
Lumina versarent oculorum expertia somno,
Multaque præterea mortis tum signa dabantur,
Perturbata animi mens in mærore, metuque,
Triste supercilium, furiosus voltus, et acer,
Sollicitæ porro plenæque sonoribus aures,
Creber spiritus, aut ingens, raròque coortus,
Sudorisque madens per collum, splendidus humos,
Tenuia sputa, minuta, croci contineta colore,
Salsaque per sauceis raucâ vix edita tusse:
In manibus verò nervi trahier, tremere artus:
A pedibusque minutatim succedere frigus
Non dubitabat, item ad supremum denique tempus
Compressæ nares, nasi primoris acumen
Tenue, cavati oculi, cava tempora, frigida pellis,
Duraque, inhorrebat rictum, frons tenta meabat
Nec nimio rigidâ post artus morte jacebant:
Octavoque ferè candenti lumine solis,
Aut etiam nona reddebant lampade vitam.

Lib. vi. 1136.

A plague like this, a tempest big with fate
Once, ravaged ATHENS, and her sad domains;
Unpeopled all her city, and her paths
Swept with destruction. For amid the realms

Begot of EGYPT, many a mighty tract
Of ether travers'd, many a flood o'erpast,
At length here fixt it; o'er the hapless house
Of PANDION hovering, and th' astonish'd race
Dooming by thousands to disease and death.
  The head first flam'd with inward heat, the eyes
Redden'd with fire suffus'd; the purple jaws
Sweated with bloody ichor; ulcers foul
Crept o'er the vocal path, obstructing close;
And the prompt tongue, expounder of the mind,
O'erflowed with gore, enfeebled in its post,
Hoarse in its accent, harsh beneath the touch.——
  Nor e'er relax'd the sickness; the rack'd frame
Lay all-exhausted, and, in silence dread,
Appall'd, and doubtful mus'd the HEALING ART.
For the broad eye-balls, burning with disease,
Roll'd in full stare, for ever void of sleep,
And told the pressing danger; nor alone
Told it, for many a kindred symptom throng'd.
The mind's pure spirit, all-despondent, rav'd;
The brow severe; the visage fierce and wild;
The ears distracted, fill'd with ceaseless sounds;
Frequent the breath; or ponderous oft and rare;
The neck with pearls bedew'd of glistening sweat;
Scanty the spittle, thin, of saffron dye,
Salt, with hoarse cough scarce labour'd from the throat.
The limbs each trembled; every tendon twitch'd
Spread o'er the hands; and from the feet extreme
O'er all the frame a gradual coldness crept.

Then, towards the last, the nostrils close-collaps'd;
The nose acute; eyes hollow; temples scoop'd;
Frigid the skin, retracted; o'er the mouth
A ghastly grin; the shrivell'd forehead tense;
The limbs outstretch'd, for instant death prepar'd
Till with the eighth descending sun, for few
Reach'd his ninth lustre, life for ever ceas'd.

Were it not that the description of the plague by Thucydides would occupy too much room, its insertion here, as an object of comparison with the Roman Bard, might gratify the curious; the concluding lines, however, of this last quotation from Lucretius will equally prove the poet's faithful attention to nature and his models; they are a transcript from the celebrated passage in Hippocrates, who has admirably thrown into one picture the various symptoms of dissolution, symptoms "well known to those that tend the dying." Ρὶς ὀξεῖα, ὀφθαλμοι κοῖλοι, κροταφοι ζυμπεπτωκότες, ὦτα ψυχρά και ξυνεσαλμένα, και ὁ λόβοι τῶν ὠτῶν ἀπεσραμμένοι, και τὸ δέρμα τὸ περι το μέτωπον, σκληρὸν τε και περιτεταμένον και καρφαλέον ἐον, και τὸ χρώμα τȣ͂ ξύμπαντος πρόσωπȣ χλωρον τε ἢ και μέλαν ἐὸν και πελιὸν ἢ μολιϐδῶδες.

From the extracts now given the reader will be able to appreciate the merits both of the original and translation. It is with peculiar propriety that blank verse has been chosen as the medium of the latter; for though the controversy still exist with regard to the superior aptitude of blank or rhymed verse for the Epopee, there can be little doubt that in a philosophic poem, where much depends upon the fidelity of the representation, this species of metre, freed as it is from the shackles of similar termination, and possessing a dignity and variety unknown to the couplet, has very powerful claims to preference. It is impossible on a subject so multiform and intricate as that of this poem to employ rhyme, though even in the hands of a master, without great redundancy, and circumlocution, and imparting rather the air of a feeble paraphrase than of a spirited and faithful version. In the translation by Creech the couplet has led, in almost every page, to the most ridiculous redundancies; a want of taste, however, in the selection of language, is as conspicuous in Creech as a deficiency of skill and address in the management of his versification. One pleonasm out of a thousand will be adequate to shew the absurdities

into which he has fallen from the dire necessity of providing a rhyme. In the sixth book, Lucretius has observed that "when an ardent fever pervades the frame, the odour of wine becomes so intolerable as to occasion, for a time, the deprivation of sense."

——Cúm membra hominis percepit fervida febris,
Tum fit odor vini plagæ mactabilis instar.

Lib. vi. 804.

which Creech has thus elegantly versified:

To those whom fevers burn, the smell
Of vigorous wine is grievous, *Death and Hell.*

In the construction of Blank Verse, however, the utmost attention is required, and the nicest ear must be exercised, in forming and arranging the style, in varying and adjusting the pauses. The mechanism of rhyme, however polished, may be acquired by practice, whereas the harmony demanded from the poet who rhymes not, is usually the result of a combination of very many lines, and not only more difficult as being more complicated, but must necessarily be accompanied with a beauty of diction and a vigour of thought which, in the couplet, are but too often compensated for, in

the opinion of the generality of poetical amateurs, by the monotonous jingle which attends it. Few, therefore, have attained to excellence in this species of composition; Shakspeare, Milton and Dyer, Akenside, Mason and Cowper, may be considered as furnishing the best models, and in their school Mr. Good seems to have studied with success. His blank verse strikes me as meriting much praise for melody and variety of rythm, for that disposition of cadence and pause which gratifies a correct ear, and which even in the longest composition loses not the charm that first attracted.

An undertaking so difficult as a poetic version of Lucretius must assuredly be deemed, cannot fail, I should hope, of meeting with due encouragement from the literary world. Should the observations and quotations which have been given in this paper, have the smallest tendency to place in a clearer point of view the merits of the Roman and his Translator, it may, I think, with confidence be asserted, that the public will be benefited by the attempt.

O111x
Acc. 1

NUMBER III.

> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

IMAGINATION, that fruitful source of the beautiful and sublime, when duly tempered and chastised by the strict ratiocination of science, throws a fascinating charm over all the walks of life; unveils, as it were, scenes of fairy texture, and draws the mind, with salutary influence, from the sordid cares, and selfish pursuits, the sanguinary tumult, and materialized enjoyments of the herd of mankind, to repose on all that is good and fair, on all that the Almighty Architect, in animate or inanimate nature, has poured forth to excite the admiration, the love and gratitude of his intellectual creatures.

But should this brilliant faculty be nurtured on the bosom of enthusiasm, or romantic expectation, or be left to revel in all its native wildness of combination, and to plunge into all the visionary terrors of supernatural agency, undiverted by the deductions of truth, or the sober realities of existence, it will too often prove the cause of acute misery, of melancholy, and even of distraction.

In the spring of life, when reason and experience are necessarily confined, almost every object rises clothed in vivid hues; earth appears a paradise, and its inhabitants little short of perfection; alas! as the man advances, as he becomes acquainted with his fellow man, how are all these splendid visions scattered on the winds! he beholds passions the most baneful devastate this beauteous globe, and witnesses, with horror and dismay, its wretched inhabitants immolate each other on the altars of avarice, and ambition. Starting from the dream of youth, he turns disgusted from the loathsome scene; perhaps, retires to commune with himself, to pause upon the lot of mortality.

To this important crisis many of the characters which adorn or blot the records of humanity, owe their origin. He, who can call religion and literature to his aid, will pass along the road of life intent on other worlds, and alone employed in this, in accelerating the powers of intellect, and in meliorating the condition of his species. From the crimes and follies of mankind, from the annals of blood, and the orgies of voluptuousness, will this man fly to no unprofitable solitude; here will he trace the finger of the Deity, and here amid the pursuits of science, the charms of music, and the pleasures of poetry, with simplicity of heart, and energy of genius, will adore the God who gave them.

Effects, however, such as these, are, unfortunately, no common result; for that intensity of feeling and ardour of expectation which usually accompany our early years, meeting with a sudden and unexpected check, sometimes lead to a train of idea the very reverse of all that pleased before, and misanthropy, and even scepticism close the scene, and chill every social and benevolent exertion. But far more common is that character which when

once awakened from the delusion of inexperience, and become acquainted with the vices of mankind, passes on with wily circumspection, intent only on moulding the crimes and passions which surround it, to instruments of pecuniary gain, or desolating ambition. Many of this class there are, whose principal object being the accumulation of property, preserve, as a mean toward its attainment, an imposing exterior, and travel through life with, what is called, *a fair character*, yet possessing no one benevolent feeling or liberal sentiment that can properly designate them for man, or rank them beyond the animal they consume.

But some there are gifted with an imagination of the most brilliant kind; who are accustomed to expatiate in all the luxury of an ideal world, and who possess a heart glowing with the tenderest sensations. These men too frequently fall a sacrifice to the indulgence of a warm and vigorous fancy, and which is, unhappily, not sufficiently corrected by a knowledge of mankind, or the rigid deduction of scientific study. The lovely scenes they had so rapturously drawn, and coloured, find no architype

in the busy paths of life, but fade beneath the gloomy touch of reality, and leave to the astonished visonary, a cheerless and a barren view; or the mind long and intensely employed in giving form and place to the fascinating fictions of fancy, or the wild delusions of superstition, is apt, on the first pressure of neglect and misfortune, to suffer derangement, and to assume for truth, the paintings of enthusiasm. Thus, the clear current of exalted thought, or generous feeling, driven from its course by sudden opposition, and vexed with unexpected tempests, not seldom spreads terror and amazement in its progress.

Many instances might be adduced of the fatal effects of giving up the reins to imagination, and of cherishing a morbid sensibility; but I shall confine myself, in this sketch, to three, and these shall be taken from the class of poets.

Poetry, to attain its highest point of perfection, demands an invention fertile in the extreme, and practised in the art of combination, and which, seizing hold of the superstitions

and fears of mankind, pours forth fictions of the most wild and horrible grandeur. The actions and conceptions of superhuman Beings preserve, in the creations of Genius, a certain verisimilitude which rivets attention, and wins even upon incredulity itself; and he who wishes powerfully to impress upon others the mingled emotions of terror and delight, must himself be tinctured with some portion of belief in the interference of immaterial agency. The metaphysic wonders of gothic superstition were in the sixteenth century absolutely a part of the creed of all ranks of society, and the poetic productions of that period, being deeply tinged with the popular ideas, operated an effect upon the mind nearly, or, perhaps, altogether unfelt in our sceptical and philosophic age. The ideas, however, relative to the re-appearance of the departed, still linger among us, and are occasionally known to exert all their wonted influence; and he who has a true taste for poetry, yet dwells, with unsated rapture, on the dreadful and mysterious imagery of our elder bards.

But it is greatly to be lamented that, in some instances, the noblest mind has been laid in

ruins by suffering a train of idea of this kind so far to intrude upon the common occurrences of life, as, in the end, to induce either profound melancholy, or absolute frenzy. The celebrated TASSO flourished in an era when the gothic mythology still retained its full influence, and possessing a vast and prolific imagination, together with an hypochondriacal temperament, and greatly attached, at the same time, to the Platonic philosophy, whose beautiful, but visionary doctrines, have misled the most superior minds, he mingled the two superstitions, and cherished his partiality for all that was greatly wonderful and singular. The composition of his immortal epic by giving scope to the boldest flights, and calling into effect, the energies of his exalted and enthusiastic fancy, whilst, with equal ardour, it led him to entertain hopes of immediate and extensive fame, laid, most probably, the foundation of his succeeding derangement. His susceptibility, too, and tenderness of feeling, were great, and when his sublime work met with unexpected opposition, and was even treated with contempt and derision, the fortitude of the poet was not proof against the keen sense of disappointment. He twice attempted to please

his ignorant and malignant critics by recomposing the poem, and, during the hurry, the anguish, and irritation attending these efforts, the vigour of a great mind was entirely exhausted, and in two years after the publication of his GERUSALEMME LIBERATA, the unhappy Bard became an object of pity and of terror!

According to Giovanni Battista Manso, the great Friend and Biographer of Tasso, and from whom the causes of his alienation of mind, we have just assigned, are drawn, his madness was accompanied with the persuasion of his being under the influence of witchcraft, and attended by an apparition, and Tasso himself, in a letter to Mauritio Cataneo, thus notices this very extraordinary supernatural Being, whom he terms, folletto. "You must know that I was bewitched, and have never been cured; and, perhaps, have more need of an exorcist than of a physician; because my disorder proceeds from magical art. I would likewise write a few words respecting my dæmon: the rascal hath lately robbed me of many crown pieces; I know not the amount, as I am by no means a miser in reckoning

my money, but, I dare say, they amount to twenty. He hath likewise turned all my books topsy-turvy; opened my chests; robbed me of my keys, which I could not keep from him. I am at all times unhappy, but especially in the night. I know not whether my disease proceeds from frenzy, or not." After he had left the Hospital of St. Ann's at Ferrara, whither he had been sent by Duke Alfonzo, and where he had been attended by the most eminent physicians, he again, in a letter to Cataneo, mentions this spiritual thief. "This day, the last of the year, the brother of the reverend Signior Licino has brought me two of your letters; but one of them was taken from me, as soon as I had read it, and, I believe, the folletto must have carried it off, because it is that in which he is mentioned: and this is one of the miracles which I have seen often in the Hospital. These things I am certain are done by some magician; and I have many arguments of it; particularly of a loaf visibly stolen from me one afternoon, and a plate of fruit taken from before me the other day, when a Polish gentleman came to see me, worthy, indeed, to be a witness of such a wonder."*

* Vita di Torquato Tasso scritta da Gio. Battista Manso.

"Manso afterwards tells us that Tasso would frequently in company be quite abstracted in his frenzy; would talk to himself, and laugh profusely; and would fix his eyes keenly upon vacancy for a long time, and then say that he saw his familiar spirit; and describe him as under the semblance of an angelic youth, such as he paints him in his dialogue of *Le Messagiero*. Manso particularly mentions that once Tasso, angry at his incredulity, told him that he should see the spirit with his own eyes. Accordingly next day, when they were talking together and sitting by the fire, Tasso suddenly darted his eyes to a window in the room, and sat so intent, that, when Manso spoke to him, he returned no sort of answer. At last he turned to him and said. 'Behold the friendly spirit, who is courteously come to converse with me; look at him, and perceive the truth of my words.' Manso immediately threw his eyes toward the spot; but with his keenest vision could see nothing, but the rays of the sun shining through the window into the chamber. While he was thus staring, Tasso had entered into lofty discourse with the spirit, as he perceived from his share of the dialogue: that of the spirit was not audible to him; but

he solemnly declares that the discourse was so grand and marvellous, and contained such lofty things, expressed in a most unusual mode, that he remained in extacy, and did not dare to open his mouth so much as to tell Tasso that the spirit was not visible to him. In some time, the spirit being gone, as Manso could judge, Tasso turned to him with a smile, and said, he hoped he was now convinced. To which Manso replied, that he had, indeed, heard wonderful things; but had seen nothing. Tasso said, 'Perhaps you have heard and seen more than ———,' he then paused; and Manso, seeing him in silent meditation, did not care to perplex him with further questions."*

Had Tasso not formed extravagant schemes of happiness and fame which are seldom, if ever, realized, and had corrected the fervor of an imagination too prone to admit the præternatural and strange, by cultivating those sciences which depend upon demonstrative evidence, or by mingling more with the world, and discriminating its various characters and foibles, the integrity of his mind had, most pro-

* Vide Letters of Literature p. 379.

bably, been preserved. Shakspeare possessed in a far superior degree, if I may be allowed the term, the powers of superhuman creation, and no poet ever enjoyed such an unlimited dominion over the fears and superstitions of mankind. Yet the acuteness, the inexhaustible variety of his genius, his talents for humour, and his almost intuitive penetration into the follies and vices of his species, enabled him to avoid, in a great measure, that credulity which his wild, terrific, yet delightful and consistent fictions, almost rivetted upon others. Milton, too, had a peculiar predilection for traditionary tales, and legendary lore, and, in his early youth, spent much time in reading romantic narratives; but the deep and varied erudition which distinguished his career, for no man in Europe, at that time, possessed a wider field of intellect, sufficiently protected him from their delusive influence, though, to the latest period of life, he still retained much of his original partiality. Ossian, however, that melancholy but sublime Bard of other times, seems to have given implicit credit to the superstitions of his country, and his poems are, therefore, replete with a variety of immaterial agents; but these are of a kind rather calculated to soothe and

support the mind, than to shake and harrow it, as the gothic, with malignant and mysterious potency.

In the present century when science and literature have spread so extensively, the heavy clouds of superstition have been dispersed, and have assumed a lighter and less formidable hue; for though the tales of Walpole, Reeve and Radcliffe, or the poetry of Wieland,* Burger and Lewis, still powerfully arrest attention, and keep an ardent curiosity alive, yet is their machinery, by no means, an object of popular belief, nor can it, I should hope, now lead to dangerous credulity, as when in the times of Tasso, Shakspeare and even Milton, witches and wizards, spectres and fairies, were nearly as important subjects of faith as the most serious doctrines of religion.

Yet have we had one melancholy instance, and toward the middle of the eighteenth cen-

* The *Oberon* of this exquisite poet which, in sportive play of fancy, may vie with the Muse of Shakspeare, and which, in the conduct of its fable, is superior to any work extant, richly merits an english dress. It is said that the late Mr. Sixt of Canterbury left a translation of this Epic. If it be well executed it would be a highly valuable present to the public.

tury, where disappointment, operating upon enthusiasm, has induced effects somewhat similar to those recorded of the celebrated Italian. In the year 1756 died our lamented COLLINS, one of our most exquisite poets, and of whom, perhaps, without exaggeration it may be asserted, that he partook of the credulity and enthusiasm of Tasso, the magic wildness of Shakspeare, the sublimity of Milton, and the pathos of Ossian. He had early formed sanguine expectations of fame and applause, but reaped nothing but penury and neglect, and stung with indignation at the unmerited treatment his productions had met with, he burnt the remaining copies with his own hands. His Odes to Fear, on the Poetical Character, to Evening, the Passions, and on the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, strongly mark the bias of his mind to all that is awefully wild and terrible. His address to Fear,

Dark Power! with shudd'ring meek submitted thought
Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awakening bards have told:
And, lest thou meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.

was prompted by what he actually felt, for, like Tasso, he was, in some measure, a convert to the imagery he drew; and the beautiful lines in which he describes the Italian, might, with equal propriety, be applied to himself:

Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
Believ'd the magic wonders which he sung.†

His powers, however, in exciting the tender emotions were superior to Tasso's, and, in pathetic simplicity, nothing, perhaps, can exceed his Odes to Pity, on the Death of Colonel Ross, on the Death of Thomson, and his Dirge* in Cymbeline, which abound with

† Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands.

* The beautiful and tender imagery in a stanza of this little dirge

The Red-breast oft at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gathered flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

has been so much a favorite with the poets that I am tempted to throw a few of their elegant descriptions into the form of a note. In the Anthologia a somewhat similar idea is thus expressed in the Epitaph on Timon:

Ως επ' εμοι μη δ'ορνις εν ειαρι κȣφον ερειδοι
Ιχνος.

Nor print the feather'd warbler in the spring
His little footsteps lightly on my grave.

WAKEFIELD.

passages that irresistably make their way to the heart.

He who could feel, with so much sensibility, the sorrows and misfortunes of others, and could pour the plaint of woe with such harmonious skill, was soon himself to be an object of extreme compassion. His anxiety and distress,

Horace has a passage of still greater similitude with regard to the wood-pigeon:

Me fabulosæ Vulture in Appulo
Altricis extra limen Apuliæ,
Ludo fatigatumque somno,
Fronde novâ puerum palumbes
Texere.——

Carm. lib. iii. od. 4.

And we all remember the ballad of our infancy, and which, perhaps, more immediately gave rise to succeeding imitations:

And Robin Red-breast carefully
Did cover them with leaves.

Shakspeare has in the following lines of his Cymbeline tenderly alluded to this bird, and which certainly suggested to Collins the stanza we have quoted:

————————With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the *Raddock* would,
With charitable bill, bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-gown thy corse.——

rendered doubly poignant by a very splendid imagination, in the event produced unconquerable melancholy, and occasional fits of frenzy, and, under the pressure of these afflictions, which gradually encreased, perished one of the sweetest of our poets, and who ever approached the lyre with a mind glowing with inspiration.

On the monument lately erected to his memory at Chichester, and executed with

Drayton also thus notices it:

Covering with moss the dead's unclosed eye,
The little Red-breast teacheth charitie.

The Muse of Gray, too, has honoured it with a tribute worthy its tender assiduity:

There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found:
The Red-breast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

And lastly Mr. Hole, in his epic romance of Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment, is not excelled by any of his predecessors in commemorating the charitable offices of this favorite:

————————Now Cador's corse he view'd,
With hoary moss and faded leaves bestrew'd.
In days of old, not yet did we invade
The harmless tenants of the woodland shade,
The crimson-breasted warbler o'er the slain
While frequent rose his melancholy strain,
With pious care, 'twas all he could, supplied
The funeral rites, by ruthless man denied.

admirable taste by the ingenious Flaxman, the poet is represented as just recovered from a fit of frenzy, and in a calm and reclining posture, seeking refuge from his misfortunes in the consolations of the gospel, while his lyre, and one of the first of his poems lie neglected on the ground. Above are two beautiful figures of Love and Pity intwined in each others arms, and beneath, the following elegant and impressive epitaph from the pen of Mr. Hayley:

Ye who the merits of the dead revere
Who hold misfortune sacred, genius dear,
Regard this tomb, where Collins' hapless name
Solicits kindness with a double claim;
Tho' nature gave him, and tho' Science taught
The Fire of Fancy, and the reach of Thought,
Severely doom'd to penury's extreme,
He pass'd, in madd'ning pain, life's feverish dream;
While rays of genius only serv'd to shew
The thick'ning horror and exalt his woe.
Ye walls that echo'd to his frantic moan,
Guard the due records of this grateful stone;
Strangers to him, enamour'd of his lays,
This fond memorial to his talents raise.
For this the ashes of a bard require,
Who touch'd the tenderest notes of Pity's lyre;
Who join'd pure Faith to strong poetic powers,
Who, in reviving Reason's lucid hours,

Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
And rightly deem'd the book of God the best.

The same warm and eager expectations of immortality and fame, associated with similar fervor, and creative energy of genius, and accompanied with still greater ignorance of mankind, led the unhappy Chatterton to suicide. The fairy visions he had drawn were blasted by the hand of poverty and neglect, and conscious of the powers which animated his bosom, and despising that world which had failed to cherish them, and of which he had formed so flattering but so delusive an idea, in a paroxysm of wounded pride, and indignant contempt, beheld in the grave alone a shelter from affliction.

Oh, ill-starr'd Youth, whom Nature form'd in vain,
With powers on Pindus' splendid height to reign!
Oh dread example of what pangs await
Young genius struggling with maglignant fate!
What could the Muse, who fir'd thy infant frame
With the rich promise of poetic fame;
Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
And mock the insolence of Critic pride;
What could her unavailing cares oppose,
To save her darling from his desperate foes;

From pressing Want's calamitous controul,
And Pride, the fever of the ardent soul?
Ah, see, too conscious of her failing power,
She quits her Nursling in his deathful hour!
In a chill room, within whose wretched wall
No cheering voice replies to Misery's call;
Near a vile bed, too crazy to sustain
Misfortune's wasted limbs, convuls'd with pain,
On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
The hapless youth in speechless horror lies;
The poisonous vial, by distraction drain'd,
Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion strain'd
Pale with life-wasting pangs, its dire effect,
And stung to madness by the world's neglect,
He, in abhorrence of the dangerous art,
Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
Tears from his Harp the vain detested wires,
And in the frenzy of despair expires!

HAYLEY.

He, therefore, who early possesses the characteristics of genius, and is desirous of placing before the public eye, its more happy effusions, should be assiduously taught the probability of ridicule, or neglect. Let not his wish to claim admiration be repressed, but let him be trained to expect it from a chosen few, and to despise the malignancy, or the apathy of the many.

The most beautiful works of imagination are the least understood, nor can an author, until he become fashionable from the recommendation of a few leading critics, meet with general applause, nor, indeed, should he either hope for, or value it. Of the multitudes who pretend to admire a Shakspeare, or a Milton, not one in a thousand, has any relish or proper conception of the author, but merely echo the opinion that reaches them, though, by a common operation of vanity, they applaud their own discernment and taste. In general, the most estimable compositions are written for posterity, and are little valued at the moment of their production. The Gerusalemme Liberata of Tasso, the Paradise Lost of Milton, and the Poems of Collins, bear testimony to the truth of the assertion.

It is, also, highly necessary to guard against those delusions which an exclusive study of works of imagination is apt to generate in a mind predisposed to poetic combination. Let the young poet be properly initiated into life, and led to mingle the severer studies with the vivid colourings of the muse, and neither

disappointment, nor melancholy will then, probably, intrude upon his useful and rational enjoyments.

To correct the sanguine expectations which young authors are too apt to form, or to divest of their too enchanting hues the dangerous and delusive pictures sketched in early life, may have its use, but it is little to be apprehended, in the present day, that the wild workings of poetic imagination should lead to that obliquity of idea which may terminate in derangement. Philosophy and science have now taken too deep root for such credulity to recur, nor is the general character of our poetry that of enthusiasm. What we have said may, however, account for the mental irregularities of a Tasso and a Collins, though, perhaps, little applicable or essential to any modern bard. The subject, nevertheless, is curious, and will, probably, be thought not altogether destitute of entertainment.

NUMBER IV.

Can music's voice, can beauty's eye,
Can painting's glowing hand supply
A charm so suited to my mind,
As blows this hollow gust of wind,
As drops this little weeping rill,
Soft trickling down the moss-grown hill,
While thro' the west where sinks the crimson day
Meek twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners grey?

MASON.

To meliorate the sufferings of unmerited calamity, to enable us to bear up against the pressure of detraction, and the wreck of ties the most endearing, benevolent Providence hath wisely mingled, in the cup of sorrow, drops of a sweet and soothing nature. If, when the burst of passion dies away; if, when the violence of grief abates, rectitude of conduct, and just feeling be possessed, recollection

points not the arrow of misfortune, it adds not the horrors of guilt; no, it gives birth to sensations the most pleasing, sweet, though full of sorrow, melancholy, yet delightful, which soften and which calm the mind, which heal, and pour balm into the wounded spirit. The man, whose efforts have been liberal and industrious, deserving, though unfortunate, whom poverty and oppression, whom calumny and ingratitude have brought low, feels, whilst conscious innocence dilates his breast, that secret gratulation, that self-approving and that honest pride which fits him to sustain the pangs of want and of neglect; he finds, amid the bitterest misfortunes, that virtue still can whisper peace, can comfort, and can bid the wretched smile. Thus even where penury and distress put on their sternest features, and where the necessaries of life are, with difficulty, procured, even here are found those dear emotions which arise from purity of thought and action; emotions from whose influence no misery can take away, from whose claim to possession no tyrant can detract, which the guilty being deprived of, sicken and despair, and which he who holds fast, is comparatively blest.

But where the mind has been liberally and elegantly cultivated, where much sensibility and strength of passion are present, and the misfortunes occurring, turn upon the loss of some tender and beloved connexion, in this case, what may be called the luxury of grief is more fully and exquisitely displayed. That mild and gentle sorrow, which, in the bosom of the good, and of the feeling, succeeds the strong energies of grief, is of a nature so soothing and grateful, so friendly to the soft emotions of the soul, that those, whose friendship, or whose love the hand of fate has severed, delight in the indulgence of reflections which lead to past endearment, which, dwelling on the virtues, the perfections of the dead, breathe the pure spirit of melancholy enthusiasm.

——————————ask the faithful youth
Why the cold urn of her, whom long he loved,
So often fills his arms, so often draws
His lonely footsteps at the silent hour
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
Oh, he will tell thee that the wealth of worlds
Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
That sacred hour, when, stealing from the noise
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooth,

With virtue's kindest looks, his aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture.————

AKENSIDE.

Here, every thing which tends to soften and refine the mind, to introduce a pensive train of thought, and call the starting tear, will long and ardently be cherished. Music, the solace of the mourner, that food of tender passion, which, while it sweetly melts the soul, corrects each harsh and painful feeling, will ever to the wretched be a source of exquisite sensation. Those writers who have touched the finest chords of pity, who mingling the tenderest simplicity with the strongest emotions of the heart, speak the pure language of nature, have elegantly drawn the effects of music on the mind; the Fonrose of Marmontelle, the Maria of Sterne, and the Julia de Roubignè of Mackenzie, but more especially the Minstrel of Beattie, sweetly evince this delightful and bewitching melancholy which so blandly steals upon the children of sorrow.

That the contemplation of nature, of the various features of the sublime and of the beautiful, often lead to reflections of a solemn

and serious cast, is a circumstance well established; and on this account, the possession of romantic and sequestered scenery is a requisite highly wished for by those who mourn the loss of a beloved object. The gloomy majesty of antique wood, the awful grandeur of o'erhanging rock, the frequent dashing of perturbed water, throw a sombre tint around, which suits the language of complaining grief. Perhaps to the wild and pictoresque beauties of Valchiusa we owe much of the poetry, much of the pathos of Petrarch, the perpetuity of whose passion for Laura was, without doubt, greatly strengthened by such a retreat; where, free from interruption, he could dwell upon the remembrance of her virtue and her beauty, could invoke her gentle spirit, and indulge the sorrows of his heart. How strongly its romantic scenery affected him, how vividly it brought to recollection those long-lost pleasures when, in the company of his beloved Laura, he wandered amid its friendly shades, and hung upon the music of her lips, every reader of sensibility will judge from the following beautiful translation of the 261st. sonnet, transcribed from an anonymous Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch.—

ON THE PROSPECT OF VALCHIUSA.

Thou lonely vale, where in the fleeting years
Of tender youth I breath'd my am'rous pain;
Thou brook, whose silver stream receiv'd my tears,
Thy murmurs joining to my sorrowing strain,
I come, to visit all my former haunts again!

O green-clad hills, familiar to my sight!
O well-known paths where oft I wont to rove,
Musing the tender accents of my love!
Long use and sad remembrance now invite,
Again to view the scenes which once could give delight.

Yes, ye are still the same—To me alone
Your charms decay; for she, who to these eyes
Gave nature beauty, now for ever gone,
Deep in the silent grave a mould'ring victim lies!

Pathetic, almost to pain, must have been the impression on the susceptible mind of Petrarch, and, indeed, on every mind alive to pity and struggling with distress such scenery will ever produce sensations of a similar kind: how delightful to the bosom of sadness, are the still sweet beauties of a moon-light evening, and who, that has a heart to feel, is not struck by the soft and tender scenery of a Claude, whose

setting suns 'diffuse such an exquisite melancholy, and whose shadowy fore-grounds drop such a grateful gloom, as are peculiarly captivating to the mind of taste and sensibility.

But nothing will better prove how greatly avaricious the soul of Petrarch was of this mingled perception of pleasure and of pain, this luxury of grief, than presenting the reader with a note translated from the margin of a manuscript of Virgil, preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, and formerly in Petrarch's possession It is enriched with many latin annotations in the poet's hand-writing, and on the first page is the following interesting passage.

"Laura, illustrious by the virtues she possessed, and celebrated, during many years, by my Verses, appeared to my eyes for the first time, on the sixth day of April, in the year thirteen hundred and twenty-seven, at Avignon, in the church of St. Claire, at six o'clock in the morning. I was then in my early youth. In the same town, on the same day, and at the same hour, in the year thirteen hundred and forty-eight, this light, this sun, withdrew from

the world. I was then at Verona, ignorant of the calamity that had befallen me. A letter I received at Parma, from my Ludovico, on the nineteenth of the following month, brought me the cruel information. Her body, so beautiful, so pure, was deposited on the day of her death, after vespers, in the church of the Cordeliers. Her soul, as Seneca has said of Africanus, I am confident, returned to heaven, from whence it came.

"For the purpose of often dwelling on the sad remembrance of so severe a loss, I have written these particulars in a book that comes frequently under my inspection. I have thus prepared for myself a pleasure mingled with pain. My loss ever present to my memory, will teach me, that there is now nothing in this life which can give me pleasure—That it is now time I should renounce the world, since the chain which bound me to it, with so tender an attachment, is broken. Nor will this, with the assistance of Almighty God, be difficult. My mind, turning to the past, will set before me all the superfluous cares that have engaged me; all the deceitful hopes that I have enter-

tained, and the unexpected and afflicting consequences of all my projects."

But, independent of a train of thought produced by adverse circumstances, scenery of a stupendous and solitary cast, will ever have, upon a person of acute feeling, somewhat of a similar effect; it will dispose to contemplation, it will suggest a wish for seclusion, a romantic and visionary idea of happiness abstracted from society. Those, who possess a genius of which imagination is the strongest characteristic, are, of all others the most susceptible of enthusiasm; and, if placed amid scenes of this description, and where civilization has made little progress, they will eventually be the sons of poetry, melancholy, and superstition. To these causes we may ascribe the peculiarities of Ossian, his deep and uninterrupted gloom, his wild but impressive mythology. I do not, indeed, deny, that even in the most polished periods of society much of this cast of mind may be observed; it is ever, I think, attendant upon genius, but, at the same time, so tempered by the sober tints of science and philosophy, that it seldom breaks in upon the province of judg-

ment and right ratiocination, The melancholy of Milton, Young, and Gray, was so repressed by the chastening hand of reason and education, as never to infringe upon the duties of life; the spirit, the energy of Milton's comprehensive soul, the rational and sublime piety of Young, the learning and morality of Gray, powerfully withheld the accession of a state of mind so inimical to the rights of society. I speak here, as I have before hinted, of a constitutional bias of mind, not of that deep sorrow which arises from the loss of a beloved relative, or from the unmerited pressure of adversity.

In addition to what has been observed concerning the effect of scenery, let it be added, that those whom misfortune has bowed down, and who have fled into retirement to indulge the luxury of grief, that those take peculiar pleasure in being witness to the decay and sad vicissitudes of nature, that the commencement and decline of autumn, the ravages of winter, the fury of the mountain torrent, the howling of the midnight storm, the terrors of a sultry noon, the burst of thunder and the flash of lightning, are to them sources of sympathy and

consolation. What sublime and pensive images may they not derive from the melancholy sighing of the gale, particularly from "that pause," observes Mr. Gray, "as the gust is recollecting itself, and rising upon the ear in a shrill and plaintive note, like the swell of an Æolian harp. There is nothing," adds he, "so like the voice of a spirit." And, indeed, however inconsiderable, in itself, such a sound may be, yet, from the association of ideas, and from the general knowledge of its being the presage of a storm, it derives a degree of awful and impressive grandeur, admirably adapted to the nurture of reflection. In such a situation as this, every thing is in unison with their feelings, each object seems to suffer; and to a mind pregnant with images of distress, little is wanting to immediate personification; they may exclaim, in the beautiful and descriptive language of Miss Seward,

'Twas here, e'en here! where now I sit reclin'd,
And winter's sighs sound hollow in the wind;
Loud, and more loud, the blast of evening raves,
And strips the oaks of their last ling'ring leaves,
The eddying foliage in the tempest flies,
And fills with duskier gloom the thick'ning skies,

Red sinks the sun behind the howling hill,
And rushes with hoarse stream, the mountain rill,
And now with ruffling billows, cold and pale,
Runs swoln and dashing down the lonely vale;
While to these tearful eyes, Grief's faded form
Sits on the cloud, and sighs amid the storm.

That this amiable and tender sorrow so frequently the concomitant of the best disposition and principles, and the certain test of a generous and susceptible heart, that this should be so often carried to an extreme, should so often militate against our social and domestic duties, is an event which merits the most serious attention. It is not however uncommon; he, to whom these sweet but melancholy sensations have been once known, will not easily be persuaded to relinquish them; he shuns society, and, dwelling on the deprivations he has suffered, seeks to indulge what, when thus cherished, is but childish imbecility. It is the more necessary, perhaps, that an error of this kind be corrected, as from the fashionable rage of affected sensibility, many otherwise would suppose themselves evincing an undoubted claim to feelings "tremblingly alive," by a mode of conduct which convicts them of folly and hypocrisy.

At the same time that the Author reprobates the excess of grief, as detracting from our public and our private duties, he, by no means, wishes to restrain those pensive and those soft emotions which arise from just affection for departed excellence, or from the consciousness of rectitude of conduct and unmerited adversity; on the contrary, he is their advocate, they support us under our misfortunes, they afford us a luxury most soothing to the mind: but let us take care it degenerates not into weakness, that it leads not to unprofitable solitude: for, as hath been justly observed, "it is not good for man to be alone."

NUMBER V.

E'quanto à dir qual era, è cosa dura,
Questa "valle" selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura.—
Tanto è amara, che pocco è più morte:
Ma per trattar del ben, ch'i vi trovai,
Dirò del altre cose, ch'i v'ho scorte.

DANTE.

The place I know not, where I chanc'd to rove;
It was a "vale" so wild, it wounds me sore
But to remember with what ills I strove:
Such still my dread, that death is little more.
But I will tell the good which there I found:
High things 'twas there my fortune to explore.

HAYLEY.

IT was evening, when Wolkmar and his dog, almost spent with fatigue, descended one of the mountains in Switzerland; the sun was dilated in the horizon, and threw a tint of rich crimson over the waters of a neighbouring lake; on

each side rocks of varied form, their green heads glowing in the beam, were swarded with shrubs that hung feathering from their summits, and, at intervals, was heard the rushing of a troubled stream.

Amid this scenery, our traveller, far from any habitation, wearied, and uncertain of the road, sought for some excavation in the rock, wherein he might repose himself, and having at length discovered such a situation, fell fast asleep upon some withered leaves. His dog sat watching at his feet, a small bundle of linen and a staff were placed beside him, and the red rays of the declining sun, having pierced through the shrubs that concealed the retreat, gleamed on the languid features of his beloved master.

And long be thy rest, O Wolkmar! may sleep sit pleasant on thy soul! Unhappy man! war hath estranged thee from thy native village; war, unnatural war, snatched thee from thy Fanny and her infant. Where art thou, best of wives? thy Wolkmar lives! report deceived thee, Daughter of affliction! for the warrior rests not in the narrow house.

Thou fled'st; thy beauty caught the eye of power; thou fled'st with thy infant and thy aged father. Unhappy woman! thy husband seeketh thee over the wilds of Switzerland. Long be thy rest, O Wolkmar; may sleep sit pleasant on thy soul.

Yet not long did Wolkmar rest; starting, he beheld the dog, who, seizing his coat, had shook it with violence; and having thoroughly awakened him, whining licked his face, and sprang through the thicket. Wolkmar, eagerly following, discerned at some distance a man gently walking down the declivity of the opposite hill, and his own dog running with full speed towards him. The sun yet threw athwart the vale rays of a blood-red hue, the sky was overcast, and a few big round drops rustled through the drooping leaves. Wolkmar sat him down, the dog now fawned upon the man, then bounding ran before him. The curiosity of Wolkmar was roused, he rose to meet the stranger, who, as he drew near, appeared old, very old, his steps scarce supporting with a staff; a blue mantle was wrapped around him, and his hair and beard, white as snow, and waving to the breeze of the hill,

received from beneath a dark cloud, the last deep crimson of the setting sun.

The dog now ran wagging his tail, first to his master, and then to the stranger, leaping upon each with marks of the utmost rapture, till too rudely expressing his joy, the old man tottering fell at the foot of a blasted beech, that stood at the bottom of the hill. Wolkmar hastened to his relief, and had just reached the spot, when starting back, he exclaimed, "My father, O my father!" Gothre, for so the old man was called, saw and knew his son, a smile of extacy lighted up his features, a momentary colour flushed his cheek, his eyes beamed transport through the waters that suffused them, and stretching forth his arms, he faintly uttered, "My beloved son!" Nature could no more: the bloom upon his withered cheek fled fast away, the dewy lustre of his eye grew dim, the throbbing of his heart oppressed him, and straining Wolkmar with convulsive energy, the last long breath of aged Gothre fled cold across the cheek of his son.

The night grew dark and unlovely, the moon struggled to appear, and by fits her pale light

streamed across the lake, a silence deep and terrible prevailed, unbroken but by a wild shriek, that at intervals died along the valley. Wolkmar lay entranced upon the dead body of his father, the dog stood motionless by his side; but, at last alarmed, he licked their faces, and pulled his master by the coat, till having in vain endeavoured to awaken them, he ran howling dreadfully along the valley; the demon of the night trembled on his hill of storms, and the rocks returned a deepening echo.

Wolkmar at length awoke, a cold sweat trickled over his forehead, every muscle shook with horror, and, kneeling by the body of Gothre, he wept aloud. "Where is my Fanny," he exclaimed, "Where shall I find her; oh! that thou hadst told me she yet lived, good old man! if alive, my God, she must be near: the night is dark, these mountains are unknown to me." As he spoke, the illumined edge of a cloud shone on the face of Gothre, a smile yet dwelt upon his features; "Smilest thou, my father," said Wolkmar, "I feel it at my heart; all shall yet be well." The night again grew dark, and Wolkmar, retiring a few paces from his father, threw himself on the ground.

He had not continued many minutes in this situation, before the distant sound of voices struck his ear; they seemed to issue from different parts of the valley; two or three evidently approached the spot where Gothre lay, and the name of Gothre was at length loudly and frequently repeated. Wolkmar, starting from the ground, sighed with anxiety and expectation, leaning forward, he would have listened, but the beating of his heart appalled him. The dog who, at first alarmed, had crept to his master's feet, began now to bark with vehemence; suddenly the voices ceased, and Wolkmar thought he heard the soft and quick tread of people fast approaching. At this moment, the moon burst from behind a dark cloud, and shone full on the dead body of Gothre. A shrill shriek pierced the air, and a young woman rushing forward fell on the body of Gothre. "Oh, my Billy," she exclaimed to a little boy, who ran up to her out of breath, "see your beloved Gothre! he is gone for ever, gone to heaven and left us. O my poor child!" clasping the boy, who cried most bitterly, "what shall we do without him, what will become of us—we will die also, my Billy!"

Wolkmar, in the mean time, stood enveloped with shade, his arms stretched out, motionless, and fixed in silent astonishment; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he faintly and with difficulty uttered, "My Fanny, my child!" His accents reached her ear, she sprang wildly from the ground, "It is my Wolkmar's spirit," she exclaimed. The sky instantly cleared all around, and Wolkmar burst upon her sight. They rushed together; she fainted. "God of mercies," cried Wolkmar, "if thou wilt not drive me mad, restore her to life:—she breathes, I thank thee, O my God, she breathes! the wife of Wolkmar lives!" Fanny recovering, felt the warm embrace of her beloved husband; "dear, dear Wolkmar," she faintly whispered, "thy Fanny —I cannot speak—my Wolkmar, I am too happy—see our Billy!" The Boy had crept close to his father, and was clasping him round the knees. The tide of affection rushed impetuously through the bosom of Wolkmar, "it presses on my heart," he said, "I cannot bear it." The domestics, whom Fanny had brought with her for protection, crouded round. "Let us kneel," said Wolkmar, "round the body

of aged Gothre." They knelt around; the moon shone sweetly on the earth, and the Spirit of Gothre passed by—he saw his children and was happy.

Of the following little poems it is my intention that simplicity and pathos should be the characteristics; how far these have been obtained it is not my province to decide, I will only say with the poetic friends, Gray and Mason,

Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy impart;
And as their pleasing influence flows confest,
A sigh of soft reflection heave the heart.*

THE TEMPEST.

All bloody sank the evening sun,
And red the wild wave gleam'd,
And loud, and bellowing o'er the deep,
The angry Tempest scream'd.

When Mary weeping, kiss'd her babes,
And laid them down to rest,
As slow the sad thought pal'd her cheek,
And chill'd her heaving breast.

* This stanza, left incomplete by Gray, was finished by Mason.

"Blow, blow," she cried, "thou wintry wind,"
Then cast her streaming eyes,
Where foaming on the rocky cliff,
The bursting breaker dies:

"Ah me! to Mary's harrass'd heart,
"How welcome yon rude tone,
"That swells on Sorrow's sadd'ning ear,
"And wailing seems to moan.

"Tho' many a day be past and gone,
"Tho' many a month be fled,
"Since Henry left his tender wife,
"And shar'd her faithful bed.

"I've seen his form, when still at eve,
"The moon on ocean slept,
"I've heard his voice when o'er the rock,
"The dying breeze hath crept."

She scarce had said, when from the deep,
Slow peal'd the sullen swell,
Dark grew the heav'ns, and dark the wave,
And fast the chill rain fell.

Then Mary thought on Henry dear,
And breath'd the tender sigh,

When, wild as screams th' untimely ghost,
  Was heard the seaman's cry.

She left her cot, and toward the cliff,
  Where plain'd the dismal sound
She flew, on hapless Henry call'd,
  And wav'd her hand around.

That moment rush'd the billowy surge,
  And o'er the rough rock roll'd,
And far thro' ocean's viewless depths,
  The knell of Mary toll'd.

Her children slept till morning's dawn,
  Then kiss'd each other's cheek;
As pouring o'er their guileless heads,
  They heard the tempest break.

They wept, they call'd for Mary dear,
  Her soft embrace delay'd,
Then turn'd their dewy eyes to heav'n,
  And claspt their hands and pray'd.

The wild winds ceas'd, the sun beam'd forth,
  Red shone the tinted ray,
The children rose; and Edward smil'd
  His Charlotte's griefs away.

O

They went to seek their lost Mamma,
  They reach'd the craggy shore,
When lo! to land poor Mary's corse,
  The tide deep-heaving bore.

When nought she answer'd, their fond hearts
  Did almost burst with grief,
"And wont mamma then speak to us,
  "And wont she bring relief?"

They kiss'd her pale lips, kiss'd her hands,
  And laid down by her side,
Their cheeks to her cold cheek they plac'd,
  And, weeping still, they dy'd.

LUCY.

Cold was the night, and drear the heath,
And high the ocean roll'd,
And shrill upon the frighted gloom,
The tortur'd spirits howl'd.

Around the Abbey's ivy'd wall,
The boding owlet flew,
By fits upon the moulder'd bone,
The moon-beam flash'd to view.

When hapless Lucy left her cot,
And wander'd forth unseen,
Whilst gently on her throbbing breast
Her sleeping babe did lean.

"Ah cruel," cried she, "was the youth,
"That could this bosom fly,
"Ah cruel left these faithful arms,
"Nor breath'd one parting sigh!"

Then rush'd she madd'ning o'er the heath,
Deep heav'd the swelling storm,
The chill rain fell, the cold wind beat,
And shrank her gentle form.

" Where shall I fly," she oft exclaim'd,
  " Where shall I seek for aid?
" Ah! would that in the narrow cell
  " This broken heart were laid."

" Hark! hark! thro' yonder cloister'd isle,
  " How shrieks the northern blast!
" See, see! oh saw ye not my babe?
  " Thy ruthless father past!"

Thus said she, and with sudden step,
  Sprang forward to pursue,
When, dreadful, from her heedless grasp
  Her little infant flew.

Ah me! upon the rocky ground,
  See gor'd its tender breast!
It scream'd—it writh'd, then stretch'd its arms,
  And sigh'd its soul to rest.

Ah Lucy, then how swell'd thine heart,
  How did thy breast heave high!
Pale grew thy features, pale thy lip,
  And pale thy sinking eye.

" Tis past," she cried, " and I will go
  " To my eternal home;

"To where thy little spirit's fled,
"I come, my child, I come!"

Then wildly to the sounding surge,
And shrieking did she fly,
Despair upon her pallid cheek,
Distraction in her eye.

"I come, my child, my lovely child,
"I come," was heard once more,
And loudly roar'd the tumbling tide,
And lash'd the rocky shore.

Then Lucy leapt from off the cliff;
Her eye was bent on heav'n,
And sure as Mercy dwelleth there,
Shall Lucy be forgiv'n.

Now darker gloom'd the lurid sky,
And louder groan'd the storm,
And white upon the turbid wave,
White floated Lucy's form.

"Forgive my Love," she faintly cried,
As wild the waters swept,
And deep beneath the billow's rage,
In peace poor Lucy slept.

NUMBER VI.

La brevità del sonetto non comporta, che una sola parola sia vana, ed il vero subietto e materia del sonetto debbe essere qualche acuta e gentile sentenza, narrata attamente, ed in pochi versi ristretta, e fuggendo la oscurità e durezza.

Comment. di Lor. de Med. sopra i suoi Sonetti.

Lorenzo de Medici has thus, in few words, accurately defined the true character of the Sonnet, a species of composition which has lately been cultivated with considerable success in England. Italy, however, may boast the honour of giving birth to this elegant and elaborate little poem, which, confined as it is to a frequent return of rhyme, and limited to a certain number of lines, imposes no small difficulty on the poet.

Among the Ancients nothing makes so near an approach to the Sonnet, as the Greek Epigram; the simplicity, sweetness and perspicuity of these compositions, which are generally occupied in illustrating a single idea, want little but the metrical arrangement and restriction of the Italians, to form the legitimate sonnet. The praise of a picture, a statue, or a poem, will be found in the *Anthologia* to be a common subject of these exquisite pieces, which, in many instances, display so much beauty of sentiment, and such a delicious vein of expression, that with all who possess great delicacy of taste, they must ever be favourites. Yet few touches of the pictoresque, or of what has been termed still-life painting, so common in the effusions of the modern writer of sonnets, are discoverable in the Greek Epigram. There are, however, two short greek poems that, in this respect, have infinite merit, namely, the fifth and seventh Idyllia of Moschus, which, as well in sentiment, as in description, may be deemed indeed unrivalled; they are, in fact, *merum nectar*.§

§ There is a beautiful imitation of the seventh Idyllium of Moschus in Dodsley's Collection, in an Ode to Cynthia, by Miss F——.

Dante, though not the inventor* of the sonnet, was the first illustrious Italian who succeeded in the composition of it. The same severe and sublime spirit which pervades his wonderful production, the *Comedia*, may be perceived in these smaller poems, though a few, written in early life, sparkle with pleasure, and youthful gaiety. A striking similitude exists between this great poet and our immortal Milton, whose sonnets partake much more of the genius of Dante than of Petrarch. Both were fond of the gloomy and the terrible, both were judges and lovers of music, both were deeply immersed in the politics of their times, and both felt the vengeance of irritated faction. That Milton was familiar with the writings of his great Predecessor the following beautiful passage in his Epistles will fully evince. "Ego certè istis utrisque linguis non extremis tantummodò labris madidus; sed siquis alius, quantum per annos licuit, poculis majoribus prolutus, possum tamen nonnunquam ad illum DANTEM, et Petrarcham, aliosque vestros compluscolos, libenter et cupidè comessatum ire. Nec me

* Guitone d' Arezzo, who flourished about the year 1250, first used the peculiar measure of the sonnet.

tam ipsæ Athenæ Atticæ cum illo suo pellucido Ilisso, nec illa vetus Roma suâ Tiberis ripâ retinere valuerunt, quin sæpe Arnum vestrum, et Fæ ulanos illos Colles invisere amem."†

The sonnets of Milton, like those of Dante, are frequently deficient in sweetness of diction and harmony of versification, yet they possess, what seldom is discernable in compositions of this kind, energy and sublimity of sentiment. The sonnets to Cyriac Skinner, to Fairfax, Cromwell and Vane, are remarkable for these qualities, and for vigour of expression, whilst those addressed to the Nightingale and to Mr. Laurence, can boast, I may venture to assert, both of melody in language and elegance in thought. It should also be observed that Milton has altogether avoided the quaint and metaphysic concetti of Petrarch.

The sonnets of this far-famed Italian have met with more applause perhaps than they deserve. Simplicity, that first of all graces in composition, he has usually violated, and considering the multitude of his productions in

† Epist. viii.

this species of poetry, it is astonishing how few can be selected which have any just claim to novelty of illustration, or variety in idea. Were twenty culled by the hand of Taste, the residue would have little, except purity and grace of style, to recommend it. In these, however, Petrarch is a model.

One of the best and earliest attempts in England to naturalize the sonnet, is to be found in the pages of the gallant Surrey, whose compositions in this department, making due allowance for the imperfect state of the language in which he wrote, have a simplicity and chastity in their style and thought which merit every encomium. Our romantic Spenser, likewise, has endeavoured to transfuse the ease and amenity of the Petrarchian stanza. It is scarcely necessary to say that he has completely failed. In his long series of sonnets, the critic will recognise many of the trifling conceits of the Italian, but find little to recompense the trouble of research.

These Opuscula of the gentle poet of the *Fairy Queen* are, however, far superior to the attempts of the mighty Father of the English

Drama. The sonnets of Shakspeare are buried beneath a load of obscurity and quaintness; nor does there issue a single ray of light to quicken, or to warm the heavy mass, Mr. Malone has once more given them to the press, but his last Editor has, I think, acted with greater judgment in forbearing to obtrude such crude efforts upon the public eye; for where is the utility of propagating compositions which no one can endure to read.

The Author of our motto, the patriotic Lorenzo De Medici, has lately, through the splendid eloquence and well-directed exertions of Mr. Roscoe, attracted much of the attention of the Literary world. His poetry, hitherto little noticed, either in his own, or other countries, has now been brought forward with merited applause; and numerous pieces, unknown even to the Literati of Italy, have, for the first time, been published in the elegant volumes of our countryman. Lorenzo has admirably exemplified the truth of his own definition, by writing a number of beautiful sonnets in accordance to its precepts. If his language be not so pure as that of Petrarch, his sentiments are more natural, and his descrip-

tions more spirited, and more faithfully drawn. "If," remarks his ingenious Biographer, "the productions of Dante resemble the austere grandeur of Michael Angelo, or, if those of Petrarca remind us of the ease and gracefulness of Raffaello, the works of Lorenzo may be compared to the less correct, but more animated and splendid labours of the Venetian school."*

Camöens, the Homer of Portugal, condescended to the production of a vast number of these elegant morsels. Mr. Hayley has favoured the public with a translation of three which certainly possess considerable merit. This small specimen, however, being the only one I have seen of the minor poems of this accomplished Bard, and which are so numerous as to occupy, along with the Commentary of Manuel di Faria, two volumes in folio, I shall only add that Hayley, when applauding the epic powers of the portuguese poet, has regretted that our country is still a stranger to the lighter graces and pathetic sweetness of his shorter compositions.

* Life of Lorenzo de Medici the Magnificent.

Among the Spaniards numerous have been the cultivators of Sonnet-Writing, and several of their poets have attained great excellence in the composition of these beautiful and often spirited little pieces. That prolific versifier Lope de Vega, has written some hundred, though few are entitled to much celebrity. An elder bard, Garcilaso de la Vega, has a claim to superior notice, several of his sonnets being truly elegant and interesting; but none of the spanish poets, in this province of the muse, rival the efforts of Lupercio Leonardo de Argensola and his brother Bartolome. These very amiable relations lived in the sixteenth century, and their productions, though incorrect and inartificial in design, possess many a pleasing, many a brilliant and pathetic passage. Some of their sonnets have been well translated in a valuable monthly publication.* Two, by Lupercio, beautiful for their reflection and sentiment, can require no apology for their introduction into this essay.

* By a gentleman in the Monthly Magazine, whose signature is T. Y. and to whom I am indebted for the motto to my second volume, as translated from the spanish of Francisco de Rioje.

I

The sun has chas'd away the early shower,
And now upon the mountain's clearer height,
Pours o'er the clouds, aslant, his growing light.
The husbandman, loathing the idle hour,
Starts from his rest, and to his daily toil,
Light-hearted man, goes forth; and patient now
As the slow ox drags on the heavy plough,
With the young harvest fills the reeking soil.
Domestic love his due return awaits,
With the clean board bespread with country cates;
And clust'ring round his knee his children press;
His days are pleasant, and his nights secure.
Oh, cities! haunts of power and wretchedness.
Who would your busy vanities endure.

II.

Content with what I am, the sounding names
Of glory tempt not me; nor is there ought
In glittering grandeur that provokes one wish
Beyond my peaceful state. What tho' I boast
No trapping that the multitude adores
In common with the great; enough for me
That naked, like the mighty of the earth,
I came into the world, and that like them
I must descend into the grave, the house
For all appointed; for the space between,
What more of happiness have I to seek
Than that dear woman's love, whose truth I know,
And whose fond heart is satisfied with me?

The first among the poets of Great Britain who attained to *excellence* in the formation of the sonnet was *Drummond* of Hawthornden; and it may, without hazard of contradiction, be asserted, that many of his pieces equal, if not excel, the more celebrated effusions of the Italian school. "If any poems," observes Mr. Pinkerton, "possess a very high degree of that exquisite doric delicacy which we so much admire in Comus, &c. those of Drummond do. Milton may often be traced in him; and he had certainly read and admired him. And if we had no Drummond, perhaps we should never have seen the delicacies of Cómus, Lycidas, Il Penseroso, L'Allegro."* To the charms of simplicity in these little poems is frequently added that attractive tenderness in sentiment and expression which usually accompanies the man of genius, and which was in Drummond, from early disappointment in love, cherished with more than common enthusiasm.

Various have been the efforts since the time of Drummond to excel in these *nugæ dificiles*, as they have been termed; Milton we have

* Ancient Scotish Poems, vol. i. p. 123.

already noticed. After his death a long chasm intervened in this department of poetry, but within the last forty years numerous cultivators of sonnet writing have sprang up. Among these we may mention with peculiar distinction, Charlotte Smith and Mr. Bowles.

As the singular arrangement, and frequent return of rhyme in the Italian sonnet, suit not well the genius of english poetry, the two authors last mentioned have in general, dismissed such restrictions, still, however, confining themselves to the number of fourteen lines, but assuming the elegiac measure. They have, on this plan, acquired for the sonnet greater sweetness and harmony of versification, and, as their subjects are usually of the plaintive kind, the tender tones of the elegy have happily been chosen, In unaffected elegance of style, and in that pleasing melancholy which irresistably steals upon and captivates the heart, they have excelled all other writers of the sonnet, and have shewn how erroneous are the opinions of those who deem this species of

composition beneath the attention of genius.*

The four sonnets which are appended to these observations, are merely introduced here in pursuance of the plan chalked out in the preface, and with no presumptious idea of their challenging a comparison with the definition of Lorenzo.

* Since these pages were given to the world Miss Seward has presented the public with a large and valuable collection of sonnets. A great majority of these is composed after the Italian model, and this lady has certainly, in many instances, overcome the difficulties hitherto supposed inseparable from an imitation, in our language, of the peculiar laws of this poem. Several of her sonnets are entitled to the appellations of sublime, pathetic and pictoresque, and few are deficient, either in choice of diction, or harmony of versification.

SONNET I.

TO A FRIEND.

Ah, cease to grieve! what tho' thy lowly home
Boast not the storied hall, or roof high-wrought,
What tho' no parian column richly fraught,
Rear her bold head beneath the swelling dome,

This be thy lot—hard by yon aged oak,
Nigh the green valley and the murm'ring rill,
Where the cliff beetles and where towers the hill,
Where the wood darkens—shall thy cottage smoke;

There, fir'd to rapture, shalt thou fold the fair,
Shalt drink the breathings of her secret sigh,
As flung on ether floats her golden hair,
And wildly wanton rolls her azure eye:
Ay, and thy hours of bliss shall friendship share,
Nor shall the Muse thy modest mansion fly.

SONNET II.

TO THE MEMORY OF A FRIEND.

What scenes of sorrow wake the soul to pain,
What floods of anguish cloud the sick'ning eye!
O Sons of Pity! pour the melting strain,
O Sons of Pity! heave the plaintive sigh!
For cold is he, the youth of graceful frame,
Whose deed of mercy spoke the feeling mind,
To whose warm breast were friendship's hallow'd flame,
The Bard's wild fancy and his fire assign'd:

Say, gentle Spirit! whither art thou fled,
To what pale region of the silent dead?
Yet why enquire? where some sweet season blows,
Sure Grief shall smile, and Friendship breathe her vows,
Despair grow mild, Distraction cease to rave,
And Love once more shall clasp the form he gave.

SONNET III.

TO A LADY WITH MUSIC.

Yes, I have heard thee wake the trembling note,
Yes, I have heard thee pour the melting lay,
Warm as at eve along the vales remote,
The strains of fancy on the ear decay;
But tho' thy voice, with magic power replete,
Thy thrilling voice can call the gushing tear,
Yet is the cadence of thy soul more sweet,
Yet is the concord of thy life more dear:
O Lady! if to sooth the throbbing pain,
To still the tumult of this anxious mind,
Some gentle Maid, in tender pity, deign
My wounds of sorrow and of care to bind,
Oh be she blest, and I will ne'er repine,
As thou art blest, her form and temper thine.

SONNET IV.

TO A FRIEND RETIRING TO FRANCE IN 1790.

Go, gentle Youth, to Gallia's patriot* shore,
Go, drink the spirit of her balmy sky,
Ah! 'twill be long alas! ere thou once more
Shalt sooth my sorrows with the mingling sigh;
Yet go—and with thee bear this parting strain
Whilst down my cheek warm flows the silent dew,
Be all that friendship's melting soul can feign,
"And all thy virtue dictates dare to do;"
And now farewell!—in what wild distant clime,
In what lone waste I draw the vital breath,
Be thou belov'd! and when at length hoar time
Shall plunge my spirit in the sleep of death,
Say, where the long grass trembles o'er thy poet's head,
Say, wilt thou drop the tear by sorrowing friendship led?

* This epithet has, unfortunately, since the year 1790, become totally inapplicable. The friends of legal liberty were, at that period, high in expectation of seeing France the seat of constitutional freedom: she has now, dreadful reverse! given birth to a Government whose despotism and ambition know no bounds, and which seems destined to carry terror and desolation through the civilized world.

May, 1798.

NUMBER VII.

————————————Many an Urn
There too had place, with votive lay inscrib'd
To Freedom, Friendship, Solitude, or Love.

MASON.

To commemorate a deceased, or absent friend, to express the sensations and moral effect arising from the contemplation of beautiful scenery, to perpetuate the remembrance of some remarkable event, or inscribe the temple and the statue with appropriate address, appear to be the chief purposes of the Inscription. It is evident that no species of composition, when well written, can better answer the wishes of the friends to virtue and to goodness than this, and almost every polished nation, therefore, has made use of it to impress the feeling mind, and to excite it to emulation. Among the Greeks it was cultivated with success, and

the Anthologia abounds in pieces of this kind written with the most elegant simplicity. The grecian epigram, indeed, (as the word imports) merely implies an inscription, and is of a nature altogether different from the Epigram of Martial, or of modern days. No point, or sparkling wit was deemed essential, but a felicitous choice of words, a suavity of style, and a pathetic flow of sentiment were indispensible, and combined to form some of the happiest productions of antiquity. Several of our English Poets, likewise, have exercised their talents in Inscriptive Writing, and many of the seats of our Nobility and Gentry are embellished with the characteristic effusions of their genius; the Leasows and Hagley Park may be mentioned as well-known instances of taste, and beautiful effect in the use of this ornament.

It will not be an employment altogether void of interest, perhaps, to trace, and give a few specimens of these elegant compositions, which are calculated to awaken the purest affections, to call forth the tear of friendship or of love, to rouse the patriot feelings, and to soften and ameliorate the heart by giving a

moral charm to the features of cultivated nature. Nothing, however, requires more taste, more discrimination of character, circumstance and place, than the attempt to decorate in this manner. Should the inscription be ill-chosen, or the scene ill-adapted to the impression meant to be conveyed, contempt, or disgust will infallibly follow, and the disappointed contriver become an object of ridicule. The most delicate and correct feelings, therefore, and a taste for pictoresque beauty must ever guide the experiment.

The ostentatious display of sorrow is always offensive; in the scene, therefore, sacred to departed genius, or friendship, the utmost simplicity should reign; sequestered and free from interruption, nothing should appear to attract the steps of the stranger, nothing that, by exciting his curiosity, may lead him to intrude. Should it be, for a moment, perceived that, by ornament and singularity, care has been taken to lead the wanderer to the spot, all the charm arising from the accidental discovery of a place so hallowed in the estimation of the possessor, is, at once, precluded, and his vanity, not his sorrow becomes apparent. The inscription

itself, likewise, should breathe the very spirit of tender melancholy, and by exquisite touches of nature, elicit even the tear of the casual observer. The following little piece by Leonidas of Tarentum, a mother deploring the loss of her son, is in the best style of the greek epigram, and imbued with its peculiar felicity of sentiment. We will suppose it inscribed upon an urn containing the ashes of the beloved youth.

Ah! dear hapless boy, art thou gone?
  Sole support of my languishing years!
Hast thou left thy fond mother alone
  To wear out life's evening in tears?

To forsake me thus old and forlorn,
  Ere thy youth had attain'd its gay bloom?
Thy sun was scarce risen at morn,
  When it set in the night of the tomb.

Alas! the fresh beam of the day
  Happy mortals with thankfulness see;
But I sicken, O Sun! at thy ray:
  It brings sadness and wailing to me!

Oh! might the dear child but return,
  From despair his lost mother to save!
Or might I but share in his urn!
  Might I flee in his arms to the grave.

WAKEFIELD.

From our own store in this class I shall select one of singular beauty, written by Shenstone, and without doubt, the most equisite production of his genius. Nothing can exceed the tender sentiment which closes it. That full justice may be done to these pathetic lines, the scenery surrounding them should be described. "The path begins gradually to ascend beneath a depth of shade, by the side of which is a small bubbling rill, either forming little peninsulas, rolling over pebbles, or falling down small cascades, all under cover, and taught to murmur very agreeably. This very soft and pensive scene is terminated with an ornamented urn, inscribed to Miss Dolman, a beautiful and amiable relation of Mr. Shenstone's, who died of the small-pox about twenty-one years of age.* On one side are the following words:

Peramabili Suæ Consobrinæ
M. D.

On the other side

Ah Maria
Puellarum Elegantissima,

* Dodsley's Account of the Leasows.

Ah Flore Venustatis Abrepta,
Vale!
Heu Quanto Minus Est
Cum Reliquis Versari,
Quam Tui
Meminisse!

It is no uncommon circumstance to meet with inscriptions placed amid the most beautiful scenery; if these are merely of the descriptive kind, nothing can well be more impertinent; or, should they suggest only trite moral, or common place sentiment, they will equally offend. The attempt to describe when the features of nature are before you, is, in general, absurd, and he who wishes to delight by moral insinuation must proceed with the utmost delicacy and caution; the thought should be natural, yet not obvious, immediately drawn from the scene, but of a kind that would not occur, probably, to one person in a hundred, yet the moment of perusal brings with it the conviction of its being the very dictate of nature, and, at the same time, no small surprize that it had not previously occurred.

In the landscape where all is of a character

joyous and gay, to introduce a pensive train of thought forms a most pleasing contrast; the poet and the painter have alike availed themselves of the idea, and the pathetic inscription has here an effect that appeals powerfully to the heart. The most beautiful odes of Horace owe their charm to this very circumstance, and the poet never interests our feelings so much as when amid the luxuriant colouring of spring he hints at the shortness of life, and the fleeting nature of our pleasures. In the fourth ode of the first book, after describing the beauties of the vernal season and the sprightly revels of the Graces and the Nymphs, he exclaims

——————O beate Sexti,
Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.
  Jam te premet nox, fabulæque Manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia: quò simul meâris,
  Nec regna vini sortiere talis,
Nec tenerum Lycidam mirabere, quo calet juventus
  Nunc omnis, et mox virgines tepebunt.

Again, after painting in vivid hues the return of spring and the vicissitudes of the seasons, he pours forth the following pathetic complaint:

Damna tamen celeres reparant cœlestia Lunæ:
Nos ubi decidimus
Quò pius Æneas, quò Tullus dives, et Ancus;
Pulvis et umbra sumus.
Quis scit an adjiciant hodiernæ crastina summæ
Tempora Dii superi?
Cùm semel occideris, et de te splendida Minos
Fecerit arbitria;
Non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia, non te
Restituet pietas.

-Lib. iv. Od. 7.

And here I cannot avoid quoting a few lines from the Abbe De Lille as given by his elegant Translator; they breathe the very spirit of the plaintive Moschus. The Abbe having in vain attempted the preservation of some venerable trees, for whose existence he thus sweetly pleads:

Oh! by those shades, beneath whose evening bowr's,
The village dancers tripp'd the frolic hours;
By those deep tufts, that shroud your fathers' tombs,
Spare, ye profane, their venerable glooms!

subjoins the annexed appostrophe:

Ye saplins rise, and crowd the empty space,
Ye dying trees forgive your dire disgrace!

The fate of short-liv'd, hapless man recal,
For you have seen the brave, the learned fall;
Corneille, Turenne, now sleep in dust; on you
A hundred springs have shed their balmy dew;
But man's best days, alas! are soonest fled,
And those once gone, to ev'ry joy he's dead!
Blest is the man whose trees for years have stood:
More blest whose happier hands create a wood.
He cries with Cyrus, as their shades disclose,
" 'Twas I, who planted all those stately rows."

THE GARDEN.

There cannot be a better example of the happy effect of introducing amid gay and luxuriant landscape a pensive idea than the celebrated Arcadia of Poussin. The Abbe Du Bos has been so peculiarly fortunate in describing this beautiful picture, that I shall make no apology for transcribing his words. "Le tableau représente le paysage d'une contrée riante. Au milieu l'on voit le monument d'une jeune fille morte à la fleur de son âge: c'est ce qu'on connoît par la statue de cette fille conchée sur le tombeau, à la maniere des anciens. L'inscription sépulcrale n'est que de quatre mots Latins; Je vivois cependant en Arcadie, *Et in Arcadia ego*. Mais cette

inscription si courte fait faire les plus sérieuses réflections à deux jeunes garçons et à deux jeunes filles parées de guirlandes de fleurs, et qui paroissent avoir rencontré ce monument si triste en des lieux où l'on devine bien qu'ils ne cherchoient pas un objet affligeant. Un d'entre eux fait remarquer aux autres cette inscription en la montrant du doigt, et l'on ne voit plus sur leurs visages, à travers l'affliction qui s'en empare que les restes d'une joie expirante. On s'imagine entendre les réflections de ces jeunes personnes sur la mort qui n'epargne ni l'age, ni la beauté, et contre laquelle les plus heureux climats n'ont point d'azile. On se figure ce qu'elles vont se dire de touchant, lorsqu'elles seront revenues de la premiere surprise, et l'on l'applique à soi-même et à ceux à qui l'on s'intèresse.* "

It is evident that in the moral inference to be drawn from surrounding scenery, the hand of a master is required, and that the poet should not attempt to say every thing that the view suggests, but rather lead the mind of the

* Réflexions critiques sur la Poësie et sur la Peinture, Section 6. 55.

Spectator to a train of association which, at the time, appears to be the offspring of his own intellect, yet what would not have been conceived without the original hint arising from the inscription.

The little piece I am about to quote seems to me a model for this species of inscriptive writing; in delineation beautiful, in moral exquisite.

FOR A TABLET ON THE BANKS OF A STREAM.

Stranger! awhile upon this mossy bank
Recline thee. If the sun ride high, the breeze,
That loves to ripple o'er the rivulet,
Will play around thy brow, and the cool sound
Of running waters sooth thee. Mark how clear
It sparkles o'er the shallows, and behold
Where o'er its surface wheels with restless speed
Yon glossy insect, on the sand below
How the swift shadow flies. The stream is pure
In solitude, and many a healthful herb
Bends o'er its course and drinks the vital wave:
But passing on amid the haunts of man,
It finds pollution there, and rolls from thence
A tainted tide. Seek'st thou for HAPPINESS?
Go Stranger, sojourn in the woodland cot
Of INNOCENCE, and thou shalt find her there.

SOUTHEY.

Many national advantages might be derived from the custom of erecting inscriptions to perpetuate the memory of any remarkable event, or deed. Were the efforts of the patriot thus cherished, the exertions of tyranny, cruelty and oppression, thus held up to detestation and infamy; were the spot on which any memorable struggle for the welfare, or liberty of mankind had occurred, thus gratefully consecrated; were the birth-place, or former residence of departed genius, the scene of renovated art or science, thus duly recorded, fresh motives to excel in all that is laudable, powerful incentives to virtue, to patriotism, to intellectual perfection, would be acquired, and the national character, perhaps, ameliorated through the medium of emulation.

The rustic and civic inscriptions of Akenside are well known, and possess considerable merit; his language is nervous, impressive and chaste. Mr. Southey, however, seems to have rivalled him in these respects, while he evidently surpasses him in pathos. From his Letters on Spain and Portugal I have selected an Inscription for the Birth-place of Pizarro; in my opinion an excellent specimen of what, among

other moral purposes, pieces of this class should effect—the reprehension of cruelty and inordinate ambition.

INSCRIPTION FOR A COLUMN AT TRUXILLO.

Pizarro here was born: a greater name
The list of Glory boasts not. Toil and Want
And Danger never from his course detered
This daring soldier; many a fight he won,
He slaughter'd thousands, he subdued a rich
And ample realm; such were Pizarro's deeds
And Wealth, and Power and Fame were his rewards
Among mankind. There is another World.
Oh Reader! if you earn your daily bread
By daily labour, if your lot be low,
Be hard and wretched, thank the gracious God
Who made you, that you are not such as he.

When the ruins of the gothic castle and Abbey are so situated as to be drawn within the range of the pictoresque improver, nothing can more happily accord with the wishes of taste, and the genius of the surrounding scenery; they are appropriate to the soil, and suggest the most interesting retrospect of the religion, manners, and customs of our ancestors; but as these beautiful remains of antiquity can only

be the lot of a fortunate few, and the attempt to imitate them is always difficult, and seldom, if ever, successful, the grecian temple, of an order adapted to the scene, has been the usual decoration of embellished ground. Ornaments of this kind, when under the controul of judgement, and not too profusely scattered, have a pleasing effect, and though not productive of reflections so national as the gothic style of architecture, yet to the elegant and cultivated mind recal the earliest and most fascinating associations. Within these beautiful and airy structures inscriptions are generally found, dedicatory of the fabric, and not seldom replete with every poetic excellence. Many specimens might be selected, either original, or happily chosen from ancient, or modern literature; but none can, perhaps, exceed the following admirable lines, translated by Mr. Bryant from the Hippolytus of Euripides: they are inscribed in an elegant Ionic temple in Blenheim gardens, supposed to be dedicated to Diana.

To thee, bright Goddess, these fair flowers I bring,
A chaplet woven from th' untainted mead,
Thy cool sequester'd haunt: where never yet

Shepherd approach'd, where the rude hind ne'er
heav'd
Th' unhallow'd axe; nor voice, nor sound is heard,
Save the low murmuring of the vernal bee:
The day-spring from above the dew distills
Genuine and mild, from the pure stream exhal'd
On ev'ry fragrant herb and fav'rite flower.

To him who secedes exhausted from the busy world, from the tumultuous cares and anxiety of public life, the most secret retirement charms in proportion to the force of contrast, and the rustic shed, or the stream-wash'd hermitage have, for a season, irresistable attractions. The rocky glen, or deep secluded valley, clothed with wood, and watered by the freshening rill, then soothe to peace the wearied spirit, disperse each angry and injurious thought, and melt the heart to all the tender offices of humanity. In situations such as these, the lover of sequestered nature has delighted to conceive the pious anchorite had formerly dwelt, and cherishing a thought which opens new sources of reflection, and throws a more aweful tint upon the scene, he builds the rude dwelling of his fancied hermit, and gives almost the features of reality. Many such scenes, the offspring of a romantic

imagination improving on the wild sketches of nature, are scattered through our island, and heightened by inscriptions more or less adapted to the occasion. One of these, valuable for its sweetness of style, but still more so for its moral imagery, may with propriety be adduced here as an example.

INSCRIPTION FOR AN HERMITAGE BELONGING TO SIR ROBERT BURDETT.

O thou, who to this wild retreat
Shalt lead by choice thy pilgrim feet
To trace the dark wood waving o'er
This rocky cell and sainted floor;
If here thou bring a gentle mind
That shuns by fits, yet loves mankind,
That leaves the schools, and in this wood
Learns the best science to be good,
Then soft as on the deeps below
Yon oaks their silent umbrage throw,
Peace, to thy prayers by virtue brought,
Pilgrim, shall bless thy hallow'd thought.

BAGSHAW STEEVENS.

Anxious to preserve the memory of departed friendship, or genius, Affection and Gratitude have endeavoured to effectuate their wishes through the medium of sculpture, and the

bust, the medallion, or the statue, claim our notice, and give an interesting character to the scenery in which they are placed. Some of the mythological figures of Greece and Rome, and some personifications of the virtues and passions, have also been adopted, but require much judgement in the choice of scene, and much attention to classical minutiæ to produce their due effect. Beneath sculpture of this kind, inscriptions are common, though seldom attaining the end proposed. A curious felicity of expression, terse and pointed, brevity and originality of conception, should unite, requisites not easily obtained, though assiduously sought for. Several excellent productions in this class may be found in the Anthologia, intended for either pictures or statues; that beautiful one commencing Ελκε ταλαν, and which I have selected for the motto of one of these sketches, is beyond all praise. The following lines written by our late worthy poet laureat, are in the true spirit of the greek epigram, and were meant to be placed beneath a statue of SOMNUS in the garden of the late learned Mr. Harris of Salisbury. The translation, which does great justice to the original, is from the pen of the celebrated Peter Pindar,

and was produced, asserts Mr. Polwhele, in a few minutes.

AD SOMNUM.

Somne levis, quamquam certissima mortis imago,
  Consortem cupio te, tamen, esse tori:
Alma quies, optata veni; nam, sic, sine vitâ
  Vivere, quam suave est; sic, sine morte, mori.*

TO SLEEP.

Come, gentle sleep, attend thy votary's prayer,
And, tho' death's image, to my couch repair!
How sweet, thus lifeless, yet with life to lie,
Thus, without dying, O how sweet to die!

WOLCOT.

This cursory view of the Inscription, and its various classes, will not, I flatter myself, prove unentertaining to the reader: the quotations are, certainly, of the most exquisite beauty, and will tend, I hope, to support my assertion, that the cultivation of this species of poetry may produce the most pleasing, and even the most salutary and beneficial effects.

* I have seen a copy in which the first and third lines are given thus:

Somne veni, et quamquam certissima mortis imago es—
Huc ades, haud abiture cito: nam &c.

NUMBER VIII.

There would he dream of graves, and corses pale;
And ghosts, that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenc'd by the owl's terrific song,
Or blasts that shriek by fits the shuddering isles along.—

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold:
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long rob'd minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

BEATTIE.

Of the various kinds of superstition which have in any age influenced the human mind, none appear to have operated with so much effect as what has been termed the Gothic.

Even in the present polished period of society, there are thousands who are yet alive to all the horrors of witchcraft, to all the solemn and terrible graces of the appalling spectre. The most enlightened mind, the mind free from all taint of superstition, involuntarily acknowledges the power of gothic agency; and the late favourable reception which two or three publications in this style have met with, is a convincing proof of the assertion. The enchanted forest of Tasso, the spectre of Camöens, and the apparitions of Shakspeare, are to this day highly pleasing, striking, and sublime features in these delightful compositions.—

And although this kind of superstition be able to arrest every faculty of the human mind, and to shake, as it were, all nature with horror, yet does it also delight in the most sportive and elegant imagery. The traditionary tales of elves and fairies still convey to a warm imagination an inexhausted source of invention, supplying all those wild, romantic, and varied ideas with which a wayward fancy loves to sport. The Provençal bards, and the neglected Chaucer and Spenser, are the originals from whence this exquisite species of

fabling has been drawn, improved, and applied with so much inventive elegance by Shakspeare. The flower and the leaf of Chaucer is replete with the most luxuriant description of these præternatural beings.——

The vulgar gothic therefore, an epithet here adopted to distinguish it from the regular mythology of the Edda, turns chiefly on the awful ministration of the Spectre, or the innocent gambols of the Fairy, the former, perhaps, partly derived from Platonic Christianity, the latter from the fictions of the East, as imported into Europe during the period of the Crusades; but whatever be its derivation, it is certainly a mode of superstition so assimilated with the universal apprehension of superior agency, that few minds have been altogether able to shake it off. Even to Philosophy admitting of the doctrine of immaterialism, it becomes no easy task consistently to deny the possibility of such an interference. Whilst it therefore gives considerable latitude to the imagination, it seems to possess more rationality than almost any other species of fabling; for confined by no adherence to any regular mythological system, but depending merely upon the possible, and

to some highly probable, visitation of immaterial agents, it has even in the present metaphysical period still retained such a degree of credit as yet to render it an important and impressive machine beneath the guidance of genuine poesy. If to those who have paid the most subtile attention to the existence and relative action of matter and spirit, it becomes a subject of doubt to deny the visible operation of spirit, surely in the bosom of the million it must still preserve some portion of influence, and as, if such an agency exist, its laws and direction must be to us altogether unknown, it furnishes, if not the probable, at least the possible, at all times a sufficient basis, for the airy structure of the poet.——

It is remote from every wish of the Author to encourage any superstition that may render his fellow creatures alive to unnecessary and puerile terror, but allowing the existence and occasionally the visible exertion of spirit upon matter, with the wise and with the good no painful emotion can arise, and if one more pang be added to the struggles of conscious guilt, the world, he should imagine, would be no sufferer; but it is here only as furnishing

fit materials for poetical composition that a wish for preserving such a source of imagery is expressed. When well conducted, a grateful astonishment, a welcome sensation of fear, will alike creep through the bosom of the Sage and of the Savage, and it is, perhaps, to the introduction of such well-imagined agency, or when not introduced upon the scene, to a very frequent allusion to it, that Shakspeare, beyond any other poet, owes the capability of raising the most awful, yet the most delightful species of terror. No poet, adopting a machinery of a similar kind, has wielded it with equal effect. Among the Italians it is too frequently addressed solely to the imagination, Ariosto in general, and Tasso sometimes, descending to all the extravaganza of oriental fiction; conducted, as by Shakspeare, it powerfully moves the strongest passions of the heart.——

Next to the Gothic in point of sublimity and imagination comes the Celtic, which, if the superstition of the Lowlands be esteemed a part of it, may with equal propriety, be divided into the terrible and the sportive; the former, as displayed in the poems of Ossian; the latter, in the songs and ballads of the Low

Country. This superstition, like the gothic, has the same happy facility of blending its ideas with the common apprehensions of mankind; it does not, like most mythological systems, involve every species of absurdity, but, floating loose upon the mind, founds its imagery upon a metaphysical possibility, upon the appearance of superior, or departed beings. Ossian has, however, opened a new field for invention, he has given fresh colouring to his supernatural agents, he has given them employments new to gothic fiction: his ghosts are not the ghosts of Shakspeare, yet are they equally solemn and striking. The abrupt and rapid fervour of imagination, the vivid touches of enthusiasm, mark his composition, and his spectres rush upon the eye with all the stupendous vigour of wild and momentary creation. So deep and uniform a melancholy pervades the poetry of this author, that, whether from natural disposition, or the pressure of misfortune, from the face of the country which he inhabited, or the insulated state of society, he seems ever to have avoided imagery of a light and airy kind; otherwise, from the originality of his genius, much in this way might have been expected. As to the superstition of the

Lowlands, it differs so little from the lighter gothic, that I am not warranted in drawing any distinction between them. It is not, however, peculiar to this district of Scotland, the Highlanders in many parts, especially in their beautiful little vales, being still enthusiastic in their belief of it.——

And here may I be pardoned if I offer a few strictures upon the dress which the British Ossian has assumed. Greatly as I admire the pathos and sublime imagery of this Bard of other times, I cannot but regret the style in which Mr. Macpherson has chosen to clothe him. A stiffness the most rigid, a monotony the most tedious, are its general characteristics, and were it not for the very powerful appeals to the heart and imagination few readers would be tempted to a second perusal. That Dr. Blair, however, a Critic of acknowledged taste and judgement, that he should approve of this mode of composition, nay, should prefer it to any species of versification, is, to me, still more extraordinary; nor can I any way account for such a remarkable, and as I should hope almost insulated, opinion, for in other instances, the perfect judge of melody and rhythm in

english poetry, is apparent. How had the pathos and sublimity of Ossian been heightened, how mingled with every variety of harmony and rhythmical cadence, had the versification of Cowper and Milton been adopted. Mr. Macpherson has termed his translation a literal one, but if really built upon oral tradition, upon a species of legendary poesy sang and set to music in a manner calculated to assist the memory, how monstrously must it have deviated from the originals; had it been his wish to have given us a faithful copy of these interesting fictions, the ballad stanza would, perhaps have afforded the choicest vehicle, but if ambitious of founding a structure of his own on these tales, the boundless variety of blank verse would surely have done more justice to his conceptions; they certainly merit a better style, and when this desideratum is obtained I shall not hesitate in placing Ossian (whether of ancient or modern production is to me perfectly indifferent) on the same shelf with Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton.——

But to return.—These are then (the vulgar gothic and the Celtic) the only two species of superstition which are still likely to retain their

ground; founded chiefly on the casual interference of immaterial beings, and therefore easily combining with the common feelings of humanity, they may yet with propriety docorate the pages of the poet, when the full-formed system of mythology, will be rejected as involving too much fiction. Some attempts, however, have been lately made to revive the Scandinavian or Islandic mythology, and the sublime effusions of Gray and Sayers have thrown a magic lustre round the daring creations of the Edda. That they will ever become popular must, I should imagine, be a matter of considerable doubt, but these authors have written for the few, for the lovers of genuine poetry, and with their suffrage they will certainly be contented.

It has been however too much the fashion among critical writers to condemn the introduction of any kind of supernatural agency although perfectly consonant with the common feelings of mankind; and the simple, yet powerful superstitions recommended to the poet in this paper, seem to bid fair for sharing the fate of more complex systems: but whilst they are thus formed to influence the people, to sur-

prise, elevate, and delight, with a willing admiration, every faculty of the human mind, how shall criticism with impunity dare to expunge them? Genius has ever had a predilection for such imagery, and I may venture, I think, to predict, that if at any time these romantic legends be totally laid aside, our national poetry will degenerate into mere morality, criticism, and satire; and that the sublime, the terrible, and the fanciful in poetry, will no longer exist. The recent publication of Mr. Hole's Arthur has, indeed, called the attention of the public to many of these fertile sources of invention, but although the work has great merit, it is confessedly built too much upon the Italian mode of fabling; the machinery is not sufficiently aweful to excite eager attention, and throughout the whole poem, perhaps, the heart is too little engaged. Imagery of this kind should not only awaken surprise, but, to leave a lasting impression, both pity and terror. Should Arthur, however, in a future edition be enlarged, and what enlargement may not a work of pure imagination admit of, a more frequent introduction of the pathetic would, most probably, seal it for immortality, for it is

nevertheless

In scenes like these, which daring to depart
  From sober truth, are still to nature true,
And call forth fresh delight to Fancy's view,
  Th' heroic muse employ'd her Tasso's art!
How have I sat, when pip'd the pensive wind,
  To hear his harp, by British Fairfax strung,
Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
  Believ'd the magic wonders which he sung!
Hence at each sound imagination glows;
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows;
Melting, it flows, pure, num'rous, strong and clear,
And fills th' impassion'd heart, and wins th' harmonious ear.

COLLINS.

Although so great a disparity evidently obtains between the two species of Gothic superstition, the terrible and the sportive; yet no author, that I am acquainted with, has, for narrative machinery, availed himself of this circumstance, and thrown them into immediate contrast. In a beautiful fragment lately published by Mrs. Barbauld, under the title of Sir Bertrand, the transition is immediately from the deep Gothic to the Arabic or Saracenic superstition; which, although calculated to surprise, would have given more pleasure, perhaps, and would have rendered the pre-

ceding scenes of horror more striking, had it been of a light and contrasted kind. Struck, therefore, with the propriety of the attempt, and the exquisite beauty that would probably result from such an opposition of imagery, I have determined to devote a few papers to this design, and in the following Ode* and Tale, which are solely amenable to the tribunal of Fancy, much of both species of the vulgar gothic superstition is introduced. Entirely relinquished to the guidance of imagination the author has not only employed the possibilities of immaterial agency, but the more obsolete and preternatural terrors of witchcraft, and enchantment; the latter are, perhaps, except in some secluded parts of the country, nearly banished from the popular creed, but at the supposed period of our story, and for two centuries afterwards Witches were thought really to exist, and Spenser most probably drew from nature, having actually seen such a shed, the reputed abode of a witch, when he penned the following descriptive lines:

* I have attended to the strictures of the British Critic on this Ode, and its diction and imagery have, in three or four instances, been altered.

There in a gloomy hollowe glen she found
A little cottage built of stickes and reedes,
In homely wise, and wall'd with sods around,
In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes,
And wilfull want, all carelesse of her needes.

B. iii. cant. 7. st. 6.

At all events it was thought necessary to acquaint the reader with the machinery of the succeeding ode and tale, that provided he choose not to venture among their horrors, he may pass forward to scenes of a more tranquil nature.

ODE TO SUPERSTITION.

Quid iste fert tumultus? Aut quid omnium
Vultus in unum me truces?

HORATIUS.

Saw ye that dreadful shape? heard ye the
scream
That shook my trembling soul?
E'en now, e'en now, where yon red lightnings
gleam
Wan forms of terror scowl—
I know thee, Superstition, fiend whose breath
Poisons the passing hours,
Pales the young cheek, and o'er the bed of death
The gloom of horror pours;
Of ghastly Fear, and darkest Midnight born,
Far in a blasted dale,
Mid Lapland's woods, and noisome wastes
forlorn,
Where lurid hags the moon's pale orbit hail:

There, in some vast, some wild and cavern'd
cell,
Where flits the dim blue flame,
They drink warm blood, and act the deed of
hell,
The "deed without a name."
With hollow shriek and boding cry,
Round the wither'd witches hie,
On their uncouth features dire,
Gleams the pale and livid fire;
The charm begins, and now arise
Shadows foul, and piercing cries,
Storm and tempest loud assail,
Beating wind and rattling hail;
Thus, within th' infernal wood,
Dance they round the bubbling blood,
Till sudden from the wond'ring eye,
Upborne on harpy wing they fly,
Where, on the rude inhospitable wild,
Fir'd by the light'ning's arrowy stroke,
Oft at the balmy close of evening mild,
They're seen to hurry round the blasted oak:
Then rise strange spectres to the pilgrim's view,
With horrid lifeless stare,
And gliding float upon the noxious dew,
And howling rend the air.

Oft near yon leaf-clad solitary fane,
Whilst morn yet clasps the night,
Some ghost is heard to sound his clanking chain,
Beheld mid moon-beam pale and dead to sight;
Nor less unfrequent the lone trav'ller hears
The sullen-sounding bell,
And the dim-lighted tow'r awakes to fears
Of haunted mansion, brake, or darkling dell.
Haste thee, Superstition fly!
Perish this thy sorcery!
Why in these gorgon terrors clad,
But to affright, afflict the bad,
'Tis thee, O Goddess! thee I hail,
Of Hesper born, and Cynthia pale,
That wont the same rude name to bear,
Yet gentle all and void of fear;
O come, in Fancy's garb array'd,
In all her lovely forms display'd,
And o'er the poet's melting soul,
Bid the warm tide of rapture roll,
To dying music, warbling gales,
Mid moon-light scenes, and woody vales,
Where Elves, and Fays, and Sprites disport,
And nightly keep their festive court;
There, mid the pearly flood of light,
In tincts cerulean richly dight,

Light-sporting o'er the trembling green,
Glance they quick thro' the magic scene,
And from the sparkling moss receive,
Shed by the fragrant hand of Eve,
The silver dew, of matchless pow'r,
To guard from harm, at midnight hour,
The lonely wight, who lost, from far,
Views not one friendly guiding star,
Or one kind lowly cottage door,
To point his track across the moor;
Whilst the storm howling, prompts his mind
Dark Demons ride the northern wind,
And, 'plaining, mourn their cruel doom,
On tempest hurl'd, and wint'ry gloom:
Oft too, along the vales at eve,
Shall Sprites the songs of gladness weave,
With many a sweet and varied flight,
Soft warbling hymn the setting light,
Heard far th' echoing hills among,
Whilst chaunting wild their heav'nly song,
Till lost in ether dies away,
The last, long, faint and murm'ring lay;
These on the lonely Bard attend,
With him the mountain's side ascend,
Or in the valley's lowly plain,
To Rapture breathe the melting strain;

These lift his soul beyond her clime,
To daring flights of thought sublime,
Where, warm'd by Fancy's brightest fire,
He boldly sweeps the sounding lyre:
Come then, with wild flow'rs, come array'd,
O Superstition, magic maid!
And welcome then, suggesting pow'r!
At evening close, or midnight hour.*

* The two species of gothic superstition, the gloomy and the sportive, are, in this Ode, represented as the offspring of different parents; the former being produced by Fear and Midnight, the latter by Hesper and the Moon. The idea is founded on a commonly received opinion, among the ancient mythologists, that there were two Cupids, one amiable and tender, the son of Jupiter and Venus, the other debauched and revengeful, the son of Nox and Erebus. Eros and Anteros, notwithstanding the derivation of the latter name, αντι ερως were both gods of mutual love.

NUMBER IX.

> But when he reach'd his castle gate
> His gate was hung with black.
> Percy's Reliques, Vol. iii.

IN the north of England towards the commencement of the reign of Edward the Fourth, lived Henry Fitzowen. He had lost his parents early in life, and had been educated with an only sister under the care of his guardian. Henry was the heir of considerable property which had been under his sole management for near four years, having arrived at that period of life when the character of the man fully unfolds itself, when at five and twenty he had gratified the wishes, and fulfilled the predictions of his friends. Possessed of an active and liberal mind, of a tender and grateful heart, he was equally an object of love and esteem to his companions and his tenants; and combined, likewise, the energies of youth, its vigour and

vivacity with, what were rare attainments in that age of anarchy and ignorance, the elegant accomplishments of the scholar and the poet. In his person he was rather athletic, yet was it gracefully formed, and had much of that chivalric air so highly prized at that time when warfare and civil discord still raged throughout the island. When rushing to the field no hero in the army of the youthful Edward burnt with superior ardour, or managed his horse and arms with equal ease and spirit; when seated mid the circle of his peaceful friends none could rival his powers of intellect and sweetness of manner, the courtesy of his demeanour to the men, the gallantry of his attentions to the fair.

With his sister, who superintended the economy of his household and a few friends he spent the major part of the year at his paternal castle in Yorkshire, a piece of fine old gothic architecture, and seated in the bosom of a romantic glen. Here, in his great hall, hung round with the arms and trophies of his ancestors, and presiding at his ancient, oaken and hospitable table, he delighted to accumulate his neighbours, and view the smile of satisfaction and pleasure play mid the charms of inno-

cence and beauty, or gladden the features of industrious dependence. Here, also, on a visit to his sister and usually accompanied by her mother, would frequently appear Adeline De Montfort. Adeline was the only daughter of an officer of great worth and bravery, and who fell contending for the Yorkists at the dreadful battle of Towton. Dying, however, in embarrassed circumstances, his widow was unable to support the establishment they had hitherto maintained, and therefore took a small but elegant house on the skirts of the forest adjoining to the Fitzowen estate. A short time sufficed to produce an intimacy between the two families, and from similarity of disposition and pursuits, Adeline and Clara Fitzowen soon became almost inseparable companions. The Daughter of Montfort was in her twentieth year, and had been gifted by nature with more than common charms, her person was elegantly formed, her eyes blue as the sky of summer, her hair of a nut-brown, and her cheeks

The roses white and red resembled well
Whereon the roary may-dew sprinkled lies,
When the fair Morn first blusheth from her cell,
And breatheth balm from opened Paradise.*

* Fairfax's Tasso.

The most unaffected modesty too, and a disposition peculiarly sweet, united to the graces of a mind polished by unusual taste, rendered her personal beauties doubly interesting, and there were few of the opposite sex who, having once witnessed her attractions, did not sigh to appropriate them. That Henry, therefore, who had such frequent opportunities of conversing with this amiable girl, should admire and love her, was an event to be expected; indeed such was his affection for her that deprived of his beloved Adeline, existence would have lost all its allurement.

To love thus ardent and sincere, and professed by a youth of the most winning manners and superior accomplishments, no woman could long be insensible, and in the bosom of Adeline glowed the sweet emotions of reciprocal passion. Amid the wild and pictoresque beauties of Ruydvellin, where the vast solitude and repose of nature, or the luxuriant and softened features of the secluded landscape awoke the mind to aweful or to tender feelings, the sensations of mutual attachment were for some time cherished undisturbed, and an union that would, probably, fix for life the felicity of

the lovers, had been projected and determined upon, when an incident accompanied with circumstances of the most singular kind threw a bar in the way of its completion.

At the distance of about twelve miles from the castle of Ruydvellin, resided Walleran Earl of Meulant, a nobleman of Norman descent, and of great hauteur and family pride. He had reached the age of forty, was unmarried, and though, from motives of ostentation, supporting a considerable and even splendid establishment, his disposition was gloomy and unsocial. In his person he was gigantic and disproportioned, and his features betrayed a stern and unrelenting severity, whilst from his eyes usually darted so wild and malignant an expression that the object on which they fell involuntarily shrank from their notice. His habits of life too were such as to excite much wonder and very horrid reports; he constantly inhabited one turret of his extensive castle, where, all night long, for many years, the glare of torches had been visible, yet his servants declared that, notwithstanding this perpetual illumination, his agitation and terror were, frequently, as the twilight closed, so dreadful,

that they fled his presence, and often at midnight from his chamber, in which he always locked himself up and forbade interruption, half stifled groans, and wailing sounds were heard as from a person under torture. At stated periods he visited a forest of very antique oak which stood about a mile from the castle: such was the massy size of these trees that they were generally esteemed coeval with the druidic times, and the gloom of their foliage was so dense and impenetrable, that the country people feared to approach the wood, and believed it to be haunted by preternatural Beings; for often at the dead noon of night shrill and demoniacal shrieks, and appearances of the most ghastly and tremendous kind had terrified the belated traveller, and once, it is said, when one of the servants of Walleran, from motives of curiosity, had traced the footsteps of his master to this enchanted forest, he dared to enter its infernal shade, and since that hour no eye has witnessed his return.

Though Walleran was thus an object of dread and aweful surmise to all around him, yet, from being possessed of very large property, and having numerous relations whose

interest it was to pay him every respect, his castle was occasionally filled with the first ranks of society, who were banqueted in a sumptuous manner, and amused with the most splendid diversions of the age, such as tournaments, mysteries, the chace, &c. On these occasions the neighbouring families were invited to the castle, and Henry Fitzowen with his Sister and Adeline usually graced the festival. Henry was one of the most expert and elegant tilters in the school of chivalry, and when Adeline's Champion and, according to etiquette, by her conducted into the lists, he performed prodigies of valour, and unhorsed almost every opponent. Adeline had then to bestow the envied prize on the object of her affections, and in these moments, her features were lighted up with peculiar animation, and her form displayed the most fascinating allurements. None beheld her without emotion, but in the breast of Walleran burnt the most intense desire, and accustomed to overcome every opposition in his amours by open force, or insidious stratagem, he had long determined, and without the smallest scruple or compunction, to get possession of the person of Adeline, for in her heart, such was the brutality of his

appetite, he had neither wish nor hope to find a place. Indeed, he was well acquainted with the connection, and had heard of the approaching union, between her and Henry, and the latter, on this account, became an object of the most malignant hatred. Frequently had he meditated on the means of conveying her from her own villa, or the castle of Ruydvellin, and one attempt through the medium of his servants the vigilance of Henry had already rendered abortive, who suspected, though he could not prove, for the villains were disguised, the machinations of his infamous and too potent neighbour.

Apprehensive, at length, he should for ever lose her, if the nuptials, the day for which was fixed, should take place, the Earl became resolved, whilst Adeline was now at Ruydvellin, to seize the earliest opportunity, and to employ all the resources of his art in effecting his diabolical purposes. It was not long ere the opportunity he had so anxiously awaited was given, for, in about a week after, Henry with a large party of his friends, the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, met together for the stag-hunt, and were, as usual, joined

by Walleran. The morning chace afforded the finest diversion, but was very long, and carried them to such a distance from home that they agreed to dine in the forest upon the provisions which they had providently brought with them, and endeavour to start fresh game after their meal. Walleran, it was observed, had retired before dinner, but as this was no extraordinary occurrence, little attention was paid to it, and a stag being shortly after roused, the chace was resumed with fresh vigour and alacrity. Nothing could exceed the spirit and swiftness of the animal, and Henry, who was generally foremost on these occasions, so far outstript his companions, that, having pushed into an intricate part of the forest with a view to reach the stag in a more direct line, and being led farther into its recesses than he was aware, at length neither the sound of hounds, horses, nor men any longer reached his ear, and perceiving his path more difficult as he proceeded, he paused, and listened with deep attention, but nothing save the sighing of the evening breeze, as it rustled through the branches of the oak, was heard. The sun was now approaching the horizon, and had shot his fiery beams into the forest, when Henry,

reflecting on the distance he was, probably from home, and on the impending gloom of night, immediately determined to retrace his steps, and regain, if possible, the open country. With this intention, therefore, he turned his steed, and carefully pursuing the path he came, at length reached the plain, when, to his great surprise, he once more beheld, and in a direction directly contrary to what he could have expected, or thought possible, the very stag he had been chacing so long in vain. He appeared lightly bounding at a distance, and as the sun shone upon his dappled sides made a pleasing and conspicuous figure. Neither dogs, nor horses, nor a single human being were in view, and Fitzowen, more from curiosity than any other motive, put spurs to his horse, and pursued him. The animal seemed perfectly at his ease, and went on gently, as if holding his chacer in contempt, when, crossing the dale, he turned into a narrow road with Henry almost at his heels, who followed him in this manner, between three and four miles through a series of winding and intricate lanes, and, had just reached him, as he conceived, when he suddenly struck to the left, and the lane closing, a vast and apparently interminable

heath rushed upon his view, but to his utter astonishment, for no shelter, or cover of any kind was present for concealment, not the least vestige of the animal he had so closely pursued could now be seen. All was nearly silent and sunk in repose; twilight had spread her grey tint over the plain, and scarce a breath of air moved the thistle down. Some clouds, however, gathered dark in the west, and were tinged with a dusky red, whilst a few large drops of rain were, now and then, heard, as they fell sullen and heavy on the heath, or shook the withered broom.

Unable to ascertain the distance from Ruydvellin, and unacquainted with the features of the country, Henry now rode impatiently forward, in hopes of discovering some road or track which might lead him to a cottage, and give him a chance for enquiry. The strangeness of the preceding incident too had occasioned some uneasiness in his bosom, and he more than once adverted to the arts and the designs of Walleran; the night also was approaching, and threatened to be stormy, and he dwelt upon the anxiety of his female friends. Whilst thus meditating, he had reached a spot

where several rugged paths seemed to stretch across the heath, and one appearing more beaten than the rest, he was about to enter upon it, when he thought he beheld, at a distance, a human figure, as of a man wrapped in dark garments, and walking swiftly on. Highly pleased with the circumstance, and anticipating ample information, he immediately quitted the track, and pushed after him. As he drew near the figure, which appeared to dilate into more than common proportion, had the garb and aspect of a monk, and glided on with such rapidity that Henry found it necessary to quicken his pace, when the plain gradually contracting, and some trees shooting up in the horizon, afforded him hopes of its termination. He now called loudly to the monk, requesting him to stop, but no answer was returned, and his form, dimly seen through the encreasing gloom, still glided noiseless along the heath, till having reached its verge, where rose the skirts of a pine forest, he, for several minutes, hurried along its border, and then suddenly disappeared. Henry was, by this time, convinced that the Being he had so long endeavoured to overtake, was nothing human, and resolved, if possible, to return to the track he

had so rashly quitted, was wheeling round, when a light not far distant glimmered among some trees, and though nearly in the same direction the delusive monk had taken, yet once more animated with the hopes of obtaining a guide, he again ventured to trust his senses, and made immediately for the spot whence the rays appeared to stream.

The light, as he advanced, glowed steady and brilliant, but required more time and effort to attain than he expected, for having left the common, he was now amid cultivated land, which consequently opposed many an obstacle to his progress. At length, however, he approached within a few hundred yards of it, still flattering himself it issued from some neighbouring hamlet, when, rising slowly from the ground, it began to expand and yield a very vivid light, then diffusing itself, and melting into air, it gradually assumed a paler tint, and disappeared.

The night now became extremely dark, the thunder growled at a distance, and the rain fell heavy, whilst Henry shocked at the delusions he had been subjected to, and tormented with

apprehension for the safety of his beloved Adeline, wandered from field to field, his imagination busy in suggesting the most dreadful events, and filled with horror and resentment as he called to mind the wild and lawless character of Walleran, to whose infernal machinations he could not avoid attributing the singular incidents which had lately befallen him.

Whilst thus situated, and in little hope of receiving either information or shelter until break of day, his attention was aroused by the barking of dogs, and making up to the sound with as much precision as the storm would permit, to his great joy he discovered a farm house whose inhabitants welcomed him with the utmost promptitude and kindness. Here he learnt that he was better than twenty miles from Ruydvellin, and that it wanted scarce an hour of midnight, but that the principal road, and which would soon lead him into that which went direct for his castle, ran within two miles of their cottage. Highly delighted with this last piece of intelligence, and extremely anxious to hasten forward, he engaged one of the farmer's sons to conduct him to the road, and then partaking of some refreshment, and

heartily regaling his steed, he made many acknowledgements to his host for his well-timed hospitality and departed.

The rain beat furiously on our travellers, and the lightning played strongly in the horizon, whilst the thunder continually muttering, and pealing louder as they advanced, gave token of a dreadful tempest. The road, however, was now before them, and the young farmer parting on his return, Henry rapidly pursued his journey, and within two hours, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, reached the border of his own domain. With a boding mind and palpitating heart he passed the well-known grounds, every now and then vividly illuminated by the glare of intense lightning, whilst the thunder rolled awfully along the vault of heaven, or burst over head in loud and repeated claps. He had now approached within view of his castle, whose numerous towers and turrets, as the lightning flashed, were distinctly seen, and made a beautiful appearance; but in the pitchy darkness which immediately succeeded, no lights could be distinguished in any part of its vast extent, a circumstance which occasioned him much

surprise, and added not a little to his apprehensions. These, however, were encreased to a painful degree when, on his arrival at the fosse, no wardens were perceived on the walls, nor was any porter at the barbacan,† which being

† As this and several other words descriptive of gothic architecture, will occur in the course of the narrative, and which to some of my readers may prove unintelligible, or obscure, the following brief, but accurate account of the common structure of a gothic castle, in which these terms are explained, cannot fail of being acceptable. The whole site of the castle was surrounded by a deep and broad ditch, sometimes filled with water, and sometimes dry, called the *fosse.* Before the great gate was an outwork, called a *barbacan,* or *antemural,* which was a strong and high wall, with turrets upon it, designed for the defence of the gate and draw-bridge. On the inside of the ditch stood the wall of the castle, about eight or ten feet thick, and between twenty and thirty feet high, with a parapet, and a kind of embrazures, called *crennels,* in the top. On this wall at proper distances square towers of two or three stories high were built, which served for lodging some of the principal officers of the proprietor of the castle, and for other purposes; and on the inside were erected lodgings for the common servants or retainers, granaries, store-houses, and other necessary offices. On the top of this wall, and on the flat roofs of these buildings, stood the defenders of the castle, when it was besieged, and from thence discharged arrows, darts, and stones, on the besiegers. The great gate of the castle stood in the course of this wall, and was strongly fortified with a tower on each side, and rooms over the passage, which was closed with thick folding doors of oak, often plated with iron, and with an iron *portcullis* or grate let down from above. Within this outward wall was a large open space or court, called, in the largest and most perfect castles, the *outer bayle* or *ballium,* in which stood commonly a church or chapel. On the inside of this outer bayle was another ditch, wall, gate, and towers, inclosing the inner bayle or court, within which the chief tower or *keep* was built. This was a very large

open, he hurried over the draw-bridge, and was about to strike upon the great gate, when, starting back with horror, he observed, as the lightning glared, that it was hung with black. This, in the periods of chivalry, being a signal of misfortune,* was sufficient to strike terror into the stoutest chief, when returning to his castle he beheld the portentous monument of disaster, and Henry, whose fears had been long alive, now felt that all his hopes were blasted, for that some dreadful event had taken place he well knew, and the uncertainty of the moment giving full scope to the powers of imagination, it came forward wrapt in the most tremendous colouring.

square fabric, four or five stories high, having small windows in prodigious thick walls, which rendered the apartments within it dark and gloomy. This great tower was the palace of the prince, prelate, or baron, to whom the castle belonged, and the residence of the constable or governor. Under ground were dismal dark vaults, for the confinement of prisoners, which made it sometimes be called the *dungeon*. In this building also was the great hall, in which the owner displayed his hospitality, by entertaining his numerous friends and followers.

Henry's History of England, vol. vi. 8vo. edit.

* It was formerly the custom on any unfortunate accident, or event, to hang the castle gates with black; and it was usual for the traveller, on observing this sign of misfortune, to enquire into its nature and cause. The motto of this paper, is taken from a ballad in the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry which discovers a very intimate acquaintance with the usuages and rites of chivalry.

When the agitation of his frame, however, had somewhat subsided he again drew near, and, lifting the massy knocker, was going to strike when the gate yielded to the impulse, being left a little open, a circumstance which its sable covering, and the momentary light of heaven, had not before given him an opportunity of perceiving. He now, therefore, entered the outer ballium and was slowly and cautiously proceeding when a deep groan, as from one in acute pain, struck his ear, and the lightning, at that instant, glancing across him, he beheld the ground moistened with blood, and two of his servants stretched dead at his feet. A sight so shocking, fixed him for some moments to the spot, but the groan being repeated, he started, and advanced to the place whence it issued, when a voice, whose tones he well recollected as those of an old and faithful domestic, in tremulous accents implored his mercy. Henry, to the infinite joy of the poor man, immediately discovered himself, and impatient to learn the cause of events so horrible, urged him to an explanation. Faint, however, with the loss of blood, racked with pain, and overwhelmed with the most tumultuous sensations on recognising his beloved master, he was unable to

articulate a word, but grasping Henry's hand, as he stooped to assist him, he pressed it with convulsive energy, and, uttering a deep sigh, reclined upon his master, and expired.

The most acute anguish now seized the unhappy Henry, who called down the bitterest imprecations on the author of his misfortunes; but conscious that all now depended upon his personal activity, and tortured with anxiety for those he held most dear, he once more endeavoured to proceed, for the darkness was so profound, that, except when the lightning streamed, not a single object could be discerned. From his knowledge of the place, however, he contrived to pass into the inner ballium, and then soon reaching the keep, entered his great hall, which he found compleatly deserted, not a single being returning his repeated calls; yet at intervals, he thought he could distinguish low groans, which seemed to issue from a considerable distance. Crossing the hall he now ascended the winding staircase, and, having attained the gallery, perceived a light which glimmered through the crevice at the bottom of a door, and making the castle again re-echo with the names of Ade-

line and Clara, was at last answered by the shrill tones of the women, who, with rapture almost too great for utterance, had now, for the first time, recollected his voice. Rushing to the door, therefore, he made every exertion to open it, but the lock being strong and massy, it resisted, for some time, his utmost efforts, though assisted by those within. At length, however, it did yield, and, the next moment, Clara Fitzowen was in his arms; but in vain did he look round for Adeline, and dreading even the result of enquiry, sank into a chair silent and racked with anxiety and disappointment; a few minutes, however, gave him the information he apprehended, for her mother, in an agony of distress, which drew tears from all present, soon accounted for the loss of her beloved child.

It appeared from her relation that about the dusk of the evening, a party of armed men, their features concealed in masks, had surprised the castle, a circumstance of easy occurrence when no hostile attempt was suspected, and entering the great hall, where the females were then assembled, seized upon Adeline, and were forcing her away, when some of the servants

interfered, and a severe struggle took place, but which, as the ruffians were prepared for opposition, soon terminated in their favour. They then bound the men they had subdued, and threw them into the dungeon of the keep, and compelling the women, and their servants, to go up stairs, locked them in an inner room, though with a light, and carried off Adeline in triumph.

This event, though it had frequently occurred to the mind of Henry since his approach to the castle, yet now that it was fully ascertained, occasioned him as much distress as if it had not been for a moment apprehended. As soon, however, as the violence of his emotion had, in some degree, abated, he accused Walleran as the author of the atrocious deed, and proposed an immediate expedition to, and attack upon his castle; then presently recollecting the dreadful scenes he had witnessed at the great gate, he requested an explanation of his sister, but Clara being totally ignorant of the circumstances he alluded to, he lighted a torch, and descended to release his servants from their dungeon, which he effected through the medium of a private passage, the principal

entrance being left too well secured for his efforts to overcome. He found several of them wounded, but so rejoiced at seeing their master again that for some minutes they completely forgot their situation and sufferings. Many, however, were still absent, and he learnt that whilst those who had been confined were still contending with the villains, a party of their fellow servants had gone round to secure the great gate, but of their fate they knew nothing. Henry now requesting those who were able, to follow him, procured some more torches, and issued forth to search the outer ballium. Here weltering in their blood were found slain the two men whom he had seen by the glare of the lightning, and, a little further, his old steward who had expired in his arms. Close by the gate, also, wounded, and on the ground, they discovered the porter and his assistant; these, on receiving some refreshment, and due attention to their injuries, speedily revived, and had soon strength enough to inform Henry, that when the struggle commenced in the great hall, they had flown to the support of their friends, but perceiving it would be vain to continue the contest without better arms, they, with three or four others, separated

to procure them; and to secure the great gate and barbacan, which, in their hurry and alarm, they had left open and unguarded. Hither, however, they had not arrived many moments before the ruffians, having subdued opposition in the hall, approached with the unhappy Adeline, whose prayers and entreaties were in vain addressed to beings who knew no touch of pity. A severe engagement now took place, but the numbers proving very unequal, and themselves and their companions shortly either wounded or slain, the villains with their helpless charge passed on, nor could it be ascertained in what direction they travelled. The porter, however, it seems, had sufficient strength remaining to crawl to the lodge, where seizing the black mantle, the omen of disaster, he had just power to suspend it on the gate, and then dropt exhausted by its side. This he did with a view to alarm any passenger, or pilgrim who might in the morning be journeying that way, and induce him to inquiry, and the offer of assistance.

The thunder had, by this time, passed off; twilight began to dawn, and Henry, notwithstanding the fatigues of the preceding day

determined to push forward immediately to the castle of Walleran, in hopes of taking him by surprise. Accordingly, arming those of his servants who had not been injured in the previous contest, and entrusting the wounded to the care of the women, he clothed himself in mail, and mounting a fresh steed, reached the magnificent halls of Walleran in little more than an hour. Here, however, to his great disappointment, he learnt, that Walleran had not returned from the chace, but that about two hours after noon, a man, who to them was a stranger, and mounted on a horse bathed in foam, had arrived to say, that the Earl would not revisit his castle for some weeks, but refused to give them any information with regard to his present place of residence.

Henry oppressed in body and mind, now slowly returned to Ruydvellin pondering on the plan he should pursue; and on his arrival at the castle, hastened to consult his sister, and the mother of his Adeline.

NUMBER X.

——————What is this
So wither'd, and so wild in its attire;
That looks not like an inhabitant o' the earth,
And yet is on 't?——

SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH no present intelligence could be obtained relative to the abode of Walleran, yet as it was most probable that where he was, there Adeline would be found, Henry determined, with the concurrence of his family, to spare no effort in detecting his residence. After a few hours rest, therefore, he armed himself compleatly, and bidding adieu to his disconsolate friends, to whom, assuming a chearful tone, he promised the speedy restoration of Adeline, he mounted his favorite roan, and issued from the great gate whilst the sun, now verging towards noon, smote full upon his plumed casque.

Not willing, however, to alarm the neighbouring country, where his person and accoutrements would be known wherever he should stop for enquiry, and secrecy being likewise necessary toward the completion of his views, he carefully concealed his features beneath his visor, assumed unusual arms, took a different device, and no retinue whatever, resolved, should he find Walleran surrounded by his myrmidons to hasten back to Ruydvellin, and collecting his faithful followers, return and attack him in full force, placing no confidence in his honour, should a single combat ensue, when thus supported by banditti. That no time might be lost in the pursuit, he dismissed two of his confidential servants on different routes, and under similar precautions.

These measures being taken, Henry carried his researches through the neighbouring seats, and made every enquiry that could lead to detection, but in vain; striking further into the country, therefore, he unexpectedly came into very wild scenery, and it was with difficulty he could procure the most homely provision in a tract so thinly inhabited, and where a shepherd's hut, or the cottage of a peasant proved

his only places of rest. Some weeks had thus passed, when toward the sunset of a very fine day, after having traversed a lone and unfrequented part, he arrived at the edge of a thick and dark forest; the sky became suddenly overcast, and it began to rain; the thunder rolled at a distance, and sheets of livid lightning flashed across the heath. Overcome with fatigue and hunger, he rode impatiently along the border of the forest, in hopes of discovering an entrance, but none was to be found. At length, just as he was about to dismount with an intention of breaking the fence, he discerned, as he thought, something moving upon the heath, and, upon advancing towards it, it proved to be an old woman gathering peat, and who, overtaken by the storm, was hurrying home as fast as her infirm limbs could carry her. The sight of a human creature filled the heart of Fitzowen with joy, and, hastily riding up, he enquired how far he had deviated from the right road, and where he could procure a night's lodging. The old woman now slowly lifting up her palsied head, discovered a set of features which could scarcely be called human, her eyes were red, piercing and distorted, and rolling horribly, glanced upon every object

but the person by whom she was addressed, and, at intervals, they emitted a fiery disagreeable light; her hair, of a dirty grey, hung matted in large masses upon her shoulders, and a few thin portions rushed abrupt and horizontally from the upper part of her forehead, which was much wrinkled, and of a parchment hue; her cheeks were hollow, withered, and red with a quantity of acrid rheum, her nose was large, prominent, and sharp, her lips thin, skinny and livid, her few teeth black, and her chin long and peaked, with a number of bushy hairs depending from its extremity; her nails also were acute, crooked, and bent over her fingers, and her garments, ragged and fluttering in the wind, displayed every possible variety of colour. Henry was a little daunted, but the old woman having mentioned a dwelling at some distance, and offering to lead the way, the pleasure received from this piece of intelligence effaced the former impression, and, alighting from his horse, he laid hold of the bridle, and they slowly moved over the heath.

The storm had now ceased, and the moon rising gave presage of a fine night, just as this singular conductor, taking a sudden turn,

plunged into the wood by a path narrow, and almost choaked up with a quantity of briar and thorn. The trees were thick, and save a few glimpses of the moon, which, now and then, poured light on the uncouth features of his companion, all was dark and dismal; the heart of Fitzowen misgave him, neither spoke, and he pursued his guide merely by the noise she made in hurrying through the bushes, which was done with a celerity totally inconsistent with her former decrepitude. At length the path grew wider, and a faint blue light, which came from a building at some distance, glimmered before them; they now left the wood, and issued upon a rocky and uneven piece of ground, whilst the moon struggling through a cloud, cast a doubtful and uncertain light, and the old woman, with a leer which made the very hair of Fitzowen stand on end, told him that the dwelling was at hand. It was so, for a gothic castle, placed on a considerable elevation, now came in view; it was a large massy structure, much decayed, and some parts of it in a totally ruinous condition; a portion, however, of the keep, or great tower, was still entire, as was also the entrance to the court or

enclosure, preserved probably by the ivy, whose fibres crept round with solicitous care. Large fragments of the ruin were scattered about, covered with moss and half sunk in the ground, and a number of old elm trees, through whose foliage the wind sighed with a sullen and melancholy sound, dropped a deep and settled gloom, that scarce permitted the moon to stream by fits upon the building. Fitzowen drew near, ardent curiosity mingled with awe dilated his bosom, and he inwardly congratulated himself upon so singular an adventure, when turning round to question his companion, a glimpse of the moon poured full upon his eye so horrid a contexture of feature, so wild and preternatural a combination, that, smote with terror and unable to move, a cold sweat trickled from every pore, and immediately this infernal Being seizing him by the arm, and hurrying him over the draw-bridge to the great entrance of the keep, the portcullis fell with a tremendous sound, and the astonished youth, starting as it were from a trance, drew his sword in act to destroy his treacherous guide, when instantly a horrible and infernal laugh burst from her, and in a moment the whole castle

was in an uproar, peal after peal issuing from every quarter, till at length growing faint they died away, and a dead silence ensued.

Fitzowen, who, during this strange tumult, had collected all his scattered powers, now looked round him with determined resolution; his terrible companion had disappeared, and the moon shining full upon the portcullis convinced him that any escape that way was impracticable; the wind sighed through the elms, and the scared owl, uttering his discordant note, broke from his nest, and, sweeping through the vale beneath, sought for more secure repose. Having reasoned himself, therefore, into a state of cool fortitude, and bent up every power to the appalling enterprise, our Adventurer entered the great tower, from a loop hole near the summit of which a dim twinkling light could be just discerned. He extended his sword before him, for it was dark, and proceeded carefully to search around, in hopes, either of discovering some aperture which might lead to the vestibule, or staircase, or of wreaking his vengeance on the wretch who had thus decoyed him. All was still as death, but as he strode over the floor, a dull,

hollow sound issued from beneath, and rendered him apprehensive of falling through into some dismal vault, from which he might never be able to extricate himself. In this situation, dreading the effect of each light footstep, a sound, as of many people whispering, struck his ear; he bent forward, listening with eager attention, and as it seemed to proceed from a little distance only before him, he determined to follow it; he did so, and instantly fell through the mouldering pavement, whilst at the same time peals of horrid laughter again burst, with reiterated clamour, from every chamber of the castle.

Fitzowen rose with considerable difficulty, and much stunned with the fall, although, fortunately, the spot he had dropped upon was covered with a quantity of damp and soft earth, which gave way to his weight. He now found himself in a large vault, arched in the gothic manner, and supported by eight massy pillars, down whose sides the damp moisture ran in cold and heavy drops, the moon shining with great lustre through three iron grated windows, which, although rusty with age, were strong enough to resist his utmost efforts, and

having in vain tried to force them, he now looked around for his sword, which, during the fall, had started from his grasp, and in searching the ground with his fingers, he laid hold of, and drew forth, the fresh bones of an enormous skeleton; he started back with horror; a cold wind brushed violently along the surface of the vault, and a ponderous iron door, slowly grating on its hinges, opened at one corner, and disclosed to his wondering eye a broken staircase, down whose steps a blue and faint light flashed by fits, like the lightning of a summer's eve.

Appalled by these dreadful prodigies, Fitzowen felt, in spite of all his resolution, a cold and death-like chill pervade his frame, and kneeling down, he prayed fervently to that power without whose mandate no being is let loose upon another, and feeling himself more calm and resolved, he again began to search for his sword, when a moon-beam, falling on the blade, at once restored it to its owner.

Having thus resumed his wonted fortitude and resolution, he held a parley with himself, and perceiving no way by which he could

escape, boldly resolved to brave all the terrors of the staircase, and, once more recommending himself to his maker, began to ascend. The light still flashed, enabling him to climb those parts which were broken or decayed. He had proceeded in this manner a considerable way, mounting, as he supposed, to the summit of the keep, when suddenly a shrill and agonising shriek issued from the upper part of it, and something rudely brushing down grasped him with tremendous strength; in a moment he became motionless and cold as ice, and felt himself hurried back by some irresistable Being; but, just as he had reached the vault, a spectre of so dreadful a shape stalked by within it, that, straining every muscle, he sprang from the deadly grasp: the iron door rushed in thunder upon its hinges, and a deep hollow groan resounded from beneath. No sooner had the door closed, than yelling screams, and sounds which almost suspended the very pulse of life, issued from the vault, as if a troop of hellish furies, with their chains untied, were dashing them in frenzy, and howling to the uproar. Henry stood fixed in horror, a deadly fear ran through every vein, and the throbbing of his heart oppressed him. The tumult,

however, at length subsiding, he recovered some portion of strength, and immediately making use of it to convey himself as far as possible from the iron door, presently reached his former elevation on the stair-case, which, after ascending a few more steps, terminated in a winding gallery.

The light, which had hitherto flashed incessantly, now disappeared, and he was left in almost total darkness, except when, now and then, the moon threw a few cool rays through some shattered loophole heightening the horror of the scene. He felt reluctant to proceed, and looked back with apprehension lest some yelling fiend should again plunge him into the vault. A mournful wind howled through the apartments of the castle, and listening, he thought he heard the iron door grate upon its hinges; he started with terror, the sweat stood in big drops upon his forehead, and he rushed forward with desperate despair, till having turned a corner of the gallery, a taper, burning with a faint light, gleamed through a narrow dark passage; approaching the spot whence it streamed, he perceived it arose from an extensive room, the folding doors of which were

wide open: he entered; a small taper in a massy silver candlestick stood upon a table in the middle of the room, but gave so inconsiderable an illumination, that one end was wrapped in palpable darkness, and the other scarcely broken in upon by a dim light that glimmered through a large ramified window covered with thick ivy. An arm chair, shattered and damp with age, was placed near the table, and the remains of a recent fire were still visible in the grate. The wainscot of black oak, had formerly been hung with tapestry, and several portions still clung to those parts which were near the fire; they possessed some vivacity of tint, and with much gilding yet apparent on the chimney piece, and several mouldering reliques of costly frames and paintings, gave indisputable evidence of the ancient grandeur of the place. Henry closed the folding doors, and, taking the taper, was about to survey the room, when a half-stifled groan from the dark end of it smote cold upon his heart, at the same time the sound as of something falling with a dead weight, echoed through the room, and a bell tolled deep and hollow from the tower above. He replaced the taper, the flame of which was agitated; now quivering,

sunk, now streaming, flamed aloft, and as the last pale portion died away, the scarce distinguished form of some terrific Being floated slowly by, and again another dreadful groan ran deepning through the gloom, and the bell swung solemn from the keep. Henry stood for some time incapable of motion; at length summoning all his fortitude, he advanced with his sword extended to the darkest part of the room: instantly burst forth in fierce irradiations a blue sulphureous splendour, and the mangled body of a man distorted with the agony of death, his every fibre racked with convulsion, his beard and hair stiff and matted with blood, his mouth open, and his eyes protuding from their sockets, rushed upon his maddening senses; he started, uttering a wild shriek, and hurrying he knew not whither burst through the folding doors.

Darkness again spread her sable pall over the unfortunate Fitzowen, and he trode along the narrow passage with a feeble and a faultering step. His intellect shook, and overwhelmed by the late appalling objects, had not yet recovered any degree of recollection, and he wandered, as in a dream, a confused train

of horrible ideas passing unconnected through his mind; at length, however, memory resumed her function, resumed it but to daunt him with harrowing suggestions; the direful horrors of the room behind, and of the vault below, were still present to his eyes, and, as a man whom hellish fiends had frightened, he stood trembling, pale and staring wild. All was now once more silent and dark, and he determined to wait in this spot the dawn of day, but a few minutes had scarce elapsed, when the iron door screaming on its hinges, bellowed through the murmuring ruin. Henry nearly fainted at the sound, which, pausing for some time, again swelled upon the wind, and at last died away in shrill melancholy shrieks; again all was silent, and again the same fearful noise struck terror to his soul. Whilst his mind was thus agitated with horror and apprehension, a feeble light streaming from behind accompanied with a soft, quick and hollow tread, convinced him that something was pursuing, and struck with wildering fear, he rushed unconscious down the steps; the vault received him, and its portals swinging to their close, sounded as the sentence of death. A dun fœtid vapour filled the place, in the centre of which arose a faint

and bickering flame. Fitzowen approached, and beheld a corse suspended over it by the neck, whilst the flame flashing through the vault, gleamed on a throng of hideous and ghastly features that came forward through the smoke. With the desperate valour of a man who sees destruction before him, he ran furiously forward; an universal shriek burst forth, and the fire rising with tenfold brilliance, placed full in view the dreadful form of his infernal guide, dilated into horror itself; her face was pale as death, her eyes were wide open, dead and fixed, a horrible grin sate upon her features, her lips black and tumid were drawn back, disclosing a set of large blue teeth, and her hair, standing stiffly erect, was of a withered red.

Fitzowen felt his blood freeze within him; his limbs became enervated, and at this moment when resistance on his part appeared almost impossible, a door bursting open at the extremity of the vault, in rushed the form of Walleran, who wielding a battle axe, aimed a blow at Henry that, situated as he then was, and rendered torpid through the influence of

preternatural agency, he conceived would be effectual for his destruction. In this, however, he was, fatally for himself, mistaken, for no sooner was he perceived than the effect of the enchantment ceased; indignation swelling at the heart of Henry, impelled the lingering fluid, his cheek flushed with the crimson tide, his limbs recovered their elasticity and tone, and avoiding with active vigour the death that was intended him, he sheathed his falchion in the breast of his opponent, who, having wasted his impetuous strength upon the air, had thus exposed himself to instant ruin.

NUMBER XI.

————————————Fairy elves,
Whose midnight revels by a forest side,
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over-head the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course, they on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.

MILTON.

WALLERAN dropt lifeless on the ground, and the dreadful appearances in the vault, the fire and all its apparatus, immediately vanished, whilst loud howlings and lamentations were heard at a distance in the air. A profound silence, however, now ensued throughout the castle, and Henry by the light of the moon, as it streamed through the grated window, beheld at his feet the bleeding corpse of his antagonist. Starting from the contemplation of his fallen enemy, he resolved to explore the ruins in

search of Adeline, of whose concealment, in some part of the building, he entertained not the smallest doubt, and, apprehensive now of little opposition, he once more attempted those stairs in ascending which he had formerly encountered so many terrors. He reached the gallery without any interruption, and passing through the folding doors into the apartment already described, discovered at one end, and on the very spot where he had beheld the tremendous vision of the agonising wretch, a narrow, winding and arched passage, and which taking a circular direction probably passed into the opposite portion of the great tower. Here he entered, but had not proceeded far before the sound as of soft and very distant music reached his ear, and shortly afterward was distinctly heard the murmur of falling water. Sounds such as these, and in such a place, greatly surprised him, and hastening forward to ascertain from what quarter they originated, he found himself suddenly immersed in a very cold and damp vapour, whose density was such that for a short time it totally suffocated the smallest ray of light; in a few minutes, however, it began, in some measure, to clear away accompanied with a whispering noise, whilst

vast eddies and gusts of thin vapour passed him with a whirling motion. He now perceived himself in a kind of large cavern whose sides were of unhewn stone, and from the roof were pendent numbers of beautiful stalactites, from whose points fell, at intervals, with a tinkling sound, large drops of water, whilst the dying notes of distant harps, the gurgling of obstructed currents, and the sighings of the restless vapour, formed a harmony so singular, yet so soothing, that when united to the surrounding chill and torpid atmosphere, seemed calculated to inspire the most profound repose. Fitzowen now advanced a little further into the cavity, and, through the chasms of the ever fluctuating mist, discerned, hanging from the centre of the roof, a vast globe, which emitted rays of the palest hue, and which in passing through the turbid vapour shed a kind of twilight.

Whilst pondering on the purport of this very peculiar scene, he felt a heaviness, and a tendency to sleep creep upon him, accompanied with an indistinctness and confusion of intellect; at this instant, however, a mass of vapour rushing by him, the light gleamed more steadily,

and he beheld in an excavation of the adjacent wall, and recumbent on a couch, what he conceived to be a human body. Curiosity was now so powerfully excited, as compleatly to expell the approaching torpor, and drawing nearer the object of his attention, he could hear the deep breathings of a person in profound sleep; the next moment he could perceive the garments of female attire, and in the succeeding instant hung with rapture and astonishment over the well-known features of his beloved Adeline. The globe shed a silvery and preternatural whiteness over her form, and the rose had left her cheek; she lay with her head reclined upon her hand, and the utmost tranquillity sate upon her countenance, though, now and then, a deep-drawn sigh would indicate the tissue of idea.

Henry stood, for some moments, rivetted to the spot, then, starting from his reverie, he wound his arms about her beauteous frame, and impressed upon her lips a glowing kiss—she awoke, and instantly a tremendous tempest burst upon them, loud thunder shook the earth, and a whirlwind, rushing through the pile, tore it from its foundations.

The lovers recovering from a trance which the conflict of the elements had occasioned, found themselves seated on some mossy turf, and around them the soft, the sweet and tranquil scenery of a summer's moon-light night. Enraptured with this sudden and unexpected change, they rose gently off the ground; over their heads towered a large and majestic oak, at whose foot they believed some kind and compassionate being had placed them. Delight and gratitude dilated their hearts, and advancing from beneath the tree whose gigantic branches spread a large extent of shade, a vale, beautiful and romantic, through which ran a clear and deep stream, came full in view; they walked to the edge of the water, the moon shone with mellow lustre on its surface, and its banks, fringed with shrubs, breathed a perfume more delicate than the odours of the east. On one side, the ground covered with a vivid, soft and downy verdure, stretched for a considerable extent to the borders of a large forest, which, sweeping round, finally closed up the valley; on the other, it was broken into abrupt and rocky masses swarded with moss, and from whose clefts grew thick and spreading trees, the roots of which, washed by many a fall of

water, hung bare and matted from their craggy beds.

Henry and his Adeline forgot in this delicious vale all their former sufferings, and giving up their minds to the pleasing influence of curiosity and wonder, they determined to explore the place by tracing the windings of the stream. Scarcely had they entered upon this plan, when music of the most ravishing sweetness filled the air, sometimes it seemed to float along the valley, sometimes it stole along the surface of the water, now it died away among the woods, and now, with deep and mellow symphony, it swelled upon the gale. Fixed in astonishment, they scarce ventured to breathe, every sense, save that of hearing, seemed absorbed, and when the last faint warblings melted on the air, they started from the spot, solicitous to know from what being those more than human strains had parted; but nothing appeared in view; the moon, full and unclouded, shone with unusual lustre, and filled with hope, they again pursued the windings of the water, which, conducting to the narrowest part of the valley, continued their course through the wood. This they entered

by a path smooth, but narrow and perplexed, where, although its branches were so numerous that no preference could be given, or any direct route long persisted in, yet every turn presented something to amuse, something to sharpen the edge of research. The beauty of the trees through whose interstices the moon gleamed in the most pictoresque manner, the glimpses of the water, and the notes of the nightingale, who now began to fill the valley with her song, were more than sufficient to take off the sense of fatigue, and they wandered on, still eager to explore, still ardent for further discovery.

The wood now became more thick and obscure, and at length almost dark, when the path, taking suddenly an oblique direction, they found themselves on the edge of a circular lawn, whose tint and softness were beyond compare, and which seemed to have been lightly brushed by fairy feet. A number of fine old trees, around whose boles crept the ivy and the woodbine, rose at irregular distances, here they mingled into groves, and there, separate and emulous of each other, vied

in spiral elegance, or magnitude of form. The water, which had been for some time concealed, now murmured through a thousand beds, and visiting each little flower, added vigour to its vegetation, and poignancy to its fragrance. Along the edges of the wood, and beneath the shadows of the trees, an innumerable host of glow-worms lighted their innocuous fires, lustrous as the gems of Golconda, and desirous yet longer to enjoy the scene, they went forward with light footsteps on the lawn; all was calm, and, except the breeze of night, that sighed soft and sweetly through the world of leaves, a perfect silence prevailed. Not many minutes, however, had elapsed, before the same enchanting music, to which they had listened with so much rapture in the vale, again arrested their attention, and presently they discovered on the border of the lawn, just rising above the wood, and floating on the bosom of the air, a being of the most delicate form; from his shoulders streamed a tunic of the tenderest blue, his wings and feet were clothed in downy silver, and in his grasp he had a wand white as the mountain snow. He rose swiftly in the air, his brilliance became excessive from

the lunar rays, his song echoed through the vault of night, but having quickly diminished to the size and appearance of the evening star, it died away, and the next moment he was lost in ether. The lovers still fixed their view on that part of the heavens where the vision had disappeared, and shortly had the pleasure of again seeing the star-like radiance, which in an instant unfolded itself into the full and fine dimensions of the beauteous being, who, having collected dew from the cold vales of Saturn, now descended rapidly towards the earth, and waving his wand as he passed athwart the woods, a number of like form and garb flew round him, and all alighting on the lawn, separated at equal distances on its circumference, and then shaking their wings, which spread a perfume through the air, burst into one general song.

Henry and Adeline who, apprehensive of being discovered, had retreated within the shadow of some mossy oaks, now waited with eager expectation the event of so singular a scene. In a few moments a bevy of elegant nymphs dancing two by two, issued from the

wood on the right, and an equal number of warlike knights, accompanied by a band of minstrels, from that on the left. The knights were clothed in green; on their bosoms shone a plate of burnished steel, and in their hands they grasped a golden targe, and lance of beamy lustre. The nymphs, whose form and symetry were beyond the youthful poet's dream, were dressed in robes of white, their zones were azure dropt with diamonds, and their light brown hair decked with roses, hung in ample ringlets. So quick, so light, and airy was their motion, that the turf, the flowers shrunk not beneath the gentle pressure, and each smiling on her favourite knight, he flung his brilliant arms aside and mingled in the dance.

Whilst they thus flew in rapid measures over the lawn, the lovers, forgetting their situation, and impatient to salute the assembly, involuntarily stept forward, and instantaneously a shrill and hollow gust of wind murmured through the woods, the moon dipt into a cloud, and the knights, the nymphs, and aerial spirits vanished from the view, leaving the astonished

pair to repent at leisure their precipitate intrusion; scarce, however, had they time to determine what plan they should pursue, when a gleam of light flashed suddenly along the horizon, and the beauteous being whom they first beheld in the air, stood before them; he waved his snow-white wand, and pointing to the wood, which now appeared sparkling with a thousand fires, moved gently on. Henry and his amiable companion felt an irresistable impulse which compelled them to follow, and having penetrated the wood, they perceived many bright rays of light, which darting like the beams of the sun through every part of it, most beautifully illumined the shafts of the trees. As they advanced forward, the radiance became more intense, and converged towards a centre, and the fairy being turning quickly round, commanded them to kneel down, and having squeezed the juice of an herb into their eyes, bade them now proceed, but that no mortal eye, unless its powers of vision were adapted to the scene, could endure the glory that would shortly burst upon them. Scarcely had he uttered these words when they entered an amphitheatre; in its centre was a throne of

ivory inlaid with sapphires, on which sate a female form of exquisite beauty, a plain coronet of gold obliquely crossed her flowing hair, and her robe of white satin hung negligent in ample folds. Around her stood five and twenty nymphs clothed in white and gold, and holding lighted tapers; beyond these were fifty of the aerial beings, their wings of downy silver stretched for flight, and each a burning taper in his hand; and lastly, on the circumference of the amphitheatre shone one hundred knights in mail of tempered steel, in one hand they shook aloft a targe of massy diamond, and in the other flashed a taper. So excessive was the reflection, that the targes had the lustre of an hundred suns, and, when shaken, sent forth streams of vivid lightning: from the gold, the silver, and the sapphires rushed a flood of tinted light, that mingling threw upon the eye a series of revolving hues.

Henry and Adeline, impressed with awe, with wonder and delight, fell prostrate on the ground, whilst the fairy spirit advancing, knelt and presented to the queen a crystal vase. She rose, she waved her hand, and smiling, bade

them to approach. "Gentle strangers," she exclaimed, "let not fear appal your hearts, for to them whom courage, truth, and piety have distinguished, our friendship and our love are given. Spirits of the blest we are, our sweet employment to befriend the wretched and the weary, to lull the torture of anguish, and the horror of despair. Ah! never shall the tear of innocence, or the plaint of sorrow, the pang of injured merit, or the sigh of hopeless love, implore our aid in vain. Upon the moon-beam do we float, and light as air, pervade the habitations of men, and hearken, O favoured mortals! I tell you spirits pure from vice, are present to your inmost thoughts; when terror, and when madness, when spectres and when death surrounded you, our influence put to flight the ministers of darkness; we placed you in the moon-light vale, and now upon your heads we pour the planetary dew: go, happy pair! from Hecate's dread agents we have freed you, from wildering fear and gloomy superstition."—

She ended, and the lovers, impatient to express their gratitude, were about to speak,

when suddenly the light turned pale, and died away, the spirits fled, and music, soft and sweet, was heard remotely in the air. They started, and, in place of the refulgent scene of magic, beheld a public road, Fitzowen's horse cropping the grass which grew upon its edge, and a village at a little distance, on whose spire the rising sun had shed his earliest beams.

NUMBER XII.

Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
Quale sopor fessis in gramine—quale per æstum
Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo.

VIRGIL.

THIS beautiful, but too much neglected poem, had ere this attracted the admiration it so justly merits, had not the stern critique of Dr. Johnson intervened to blast its rising fame. A juster relish of the excellencies of poetry, and a more candid style of criticism, may be considered as characteristic of several of the first literary men of the present day, and but for the harsh censure of the author of the Rambler, the pages of Dyer would now, perhaps, have been familiar to every lover and judge of nervous and highly finished description. As it is, however, they are seldom consulted, from an idea, that little worthy of applause, would gratify the enquirer. To remove, therefore,

the prejudices which have been sown, and to place before the reader some of the numerous passages of the FLEECE which are written in the genuine spirit of poetry, form the purport of our paper.

Johnson to occasional felicity of diction, great purity of moral, and energy of thought, united a very considerable portion of critical acumen, and his Lives of Dryden and Pope, are noble specimens of his powers of discrimination; yet, notwithstanding this rare combination of striking qualities, he was deficient in that sensibility to, and enthusiasm for the charms of nature, in that relish for the simple and pathetic, so absolutely necessary to just criticism in poetry. To these defalcations were superadded an unreasonable antipathy to blank verse, a constitutional ruggedness of temper, and a bigotted, though well-meant, adhesion to some very extravagant political and religious tenets. His biographical details have suffered much from these peculiarities of temper and of taste, and a Milton, an Akenside, a Collins, a Dyer and a Gray, might upbraid the Literary Dictator for his bitter and illiberal invective, his churlish and parsimonious praise, his great and various misrepresentations.

To refute his strictures upon Dyer can prove a task of no very formidable kind, and may restore to due rank a poem which contains a vast variety of landscapes drawn and coloured in the most spirited and fascinating style.

"Of The Fleece," says our harsh critic, "which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. The wool-comber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is *to couple the serpent with the fowl.* When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery and incidental digressions, by clothing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased."

"Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's Fleece, for, if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence."*

In attending to these animadversions it may, in the first place, be observed, that few poetical productions of great and original merit ever rapidly became favourites with the public. They, in general, require their more brilliant passages to be developed and appreciated by men of sound judgment and taste, before they can be relished or understood by the multitude of those who read merely for amusement, and who possess, perhaps, no vigour of understanding, or power of selection, adequate to form a just estimate for themselves. No great length of time had elapsed between the publication of the FLEECE in 1757 and the critical effusions of Johnson, and, if it be considered that

* Johnson's Lives, Vol. iv. p. 321.

didactic poetry, as not immediately addressing the passions, can never hope to vie with the dramatic in point of *celerity* of introduction, it may be affirmed that a sufficient space had not been allowed for the acquisition of numerous admirers, when the Doctor passed sentence upon the work, and thwarted its progress towards public esteem. That it was *universally neglected*, however, at the period when the Biography of Johnson was published, is by no means the fact; Dr. Warton, perhaps the first of our critics, and whose merit Johnson has himself acknowledged in the highest terms, has classed the Fleece, in every edition of his Essay on Pope, among the *excellent pieces of the didactic kind* which the moderns have produced, and though, as we have already observed, its merits are not duly admitted, yet has it been occasionally quoted from the era of its publication to the present times, and even a friend of our Biographer, Scott of Amwell, has termed it the "*noblest of didactic poems.*" He who shall peruse the extracts from the Fleece appended to these observations, will hear, with no small indignation, the critic asserting that he "can say little that is likely to recall it to attention." Had the

beautiful passages selected for this sketch, and about which, I should imagine, there can be no difference of opinion, been merely adduced in the pages of Johnson, the attention of every man of taste and feeling had been fixed, and the Doctor had been spared, perhaps, the trouble and the reproach of censuring what must be pronounced excellent the moment it is known. I greatly suspect, however, that the work which is thus severely condemned, was little familiar to the critic, and had been thrown aside, after a very cursory survey, with every prejudice against the subject, and its mode of versification. I cannot otherwise account for a blindness so total toward some of the finest specimens of descriptive poetry.

To convey instruction in the garb of pleasure, is the aim of the didactic poet, and the more rugged and intractable the theme, the greater skill and genius are required in smoothing its asperities, and in decorating it with flowers of choicest hue and odour. A difficulty removed affords no trivial delight, and in didactic poetry those bards have succeeded best who have chosen a subject neither too elevated on the one hand, nor too mean and

despicable on the other. The *Pleasures of Imagination* excite expectations which are not, perhaps, fully gratified, whilst the poems of Lucretius and Virgil, and even the Syphilis of Fracastorius, and the Art of Preserving Health of Armstrong, delight us with beauties which cannot be anticipated, which seem the work of enchantment, and possess a double fascination from the grateful impulse of surprise. When Dr. Johnson speaks of the discordance between the wool-comber and the poet, he would induce his readers to suppose that the employment of the former was the sole subject of the poem under our consideration; but what must be their astonishment, on surveying the work, to discover that the labours of the loom occupy but a small portion of the third book! In short no theme, in this species of his art, seems better adapted for the felicitous exertions of the poet than the one Dyer has chosen, and to shew how compleatly the learned Biographer has misrepresented the very nature of the poem he was criticising, I shall briefly mention the chief topics of every book. The first is entirely employed in the breeding, tending and shearing of sheep; occupations intimately connected with all that is delightful in rural

imagery, pastoral simplicity, and domestic enjoyment. The second describes the diversities and preservation of the Fleece; the countries in ancient and modern times esteemed for wool; the history of the Argonantic expedition; the decay of arts and sciences; their revival at Venice; the discoveries of Bishop Blaise; the dying of wool, and the advantages and utility of trade. The opening of the third contains a description of spinning, of the loom, and of weaving; then follow the praise of country work-houses; a prospect of Burstal and Leeds; a history of the art of weaving, its removal from the Netherlands and settlement in England; an account of saracenic tapestry; a view of the arts and wealth of different countries; a view of the roads and rivers through which our manufactures are conveyed; a comparison between our navigations and those of other countries; a relation of the attempt to join the Nile and Red Sea, the Ocean and Mediterranean through the medium of canals; an account of the union of the Trent and Severn with the Thames, and a view of the Thames and of the Port of London. The fourth displays a still more fertile field, for the poet, in tracing the exportation of our manu-

factures, visits almost every part of the globe. Spain, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, Petersburg, the ancient and modern course to the Indies, Africa, Persia, Hindostan, the Spice Islands and China are introduced and adorned with various pictoresque circumstances. The journey of the caravans also from Petersburg to Pekin, is related at considerable length, and abounds with many well-drawn and interesting scenes. A transition is then made to North and South America, and the poem concludes with some apposite reflections on the commerce and naval power of Great Britain.

From this analysis it will be immediately perceived that Johnson has misled the public, that the idea he would insinuate is totally unfounded, and that few subjects can boast a greater variety of materials, or more calculated for poetic ornament than the Fleece.

The next paragraph with which the Doctor has favoured us contains a glaring inconsistency; after acknowledging that Dyer possessed a mind *not unpoetical*, he immediately adds, that he has also *interested his reader in our native commodity*, that he has *interspersed rural*

imagery and incidental digressions, yet, notwithstanding this extorted encomium, the succeeding words give the extraordinary information, that although the reader be interested in our native commodity, he is, nevertheless disgusted and repelled by the *subject*, however willing to be pleased, and that even the poet himself *sinks under insuperable oppression from the meanness and irreverence habitually annexed to it.*

Now, to interest the reader in the subject, to intersperse rural imagery, and incidental digressions, is the very definition of excellence in didactic poetry, and how the poet who has done this, can, at the same time, disgust and repel his reader, or himself sink under insuperable oppression, appears to me a most inexplicable position. The truth is, the meanness and irreverence are of Johnson's own creation, for the outline of the work includes, as we have seen, especially in the last book, more splendid and magnificent scenery than were ever before attached to any didactic poem.

When the Doctor accuses Dyer of *clothing small images in great words*, he has assuredly

mistaken the character of his diction, which, for purity, simplicity, and freedom from bombast, is, perhaps, one of our first models. Nothing tumid, nothing in his phraseology too great for the occasion, can, I think, be discovered in the Fleece. In those parts which are most purely preceptive, the language is plain, yet elegant, but never so elevated as to throw an air of burlesque over the subject. From the digressional portion of the poem, where diction more lofty and elaborate could be used with propriety, I shall be able to select some passages which are truly sublime, and several which are justly entitled to the epithets pathetic and descriptive.

As to the encumberance of blank verse, it is well known that Johnson, owing, perhaps, to the failure of the only attempt he made in that species of versification, held it in utter aversion, and, in general, thought a poem had a claim to little mercy when clothed in this forbidding dress. In reviewing the works of Dyer this unhappy prejudice has operated with its wonted force, and has precluded the perception of beauties, which, had they been

enveloped in rhyme, would, without doubt, powerfully have arrested his attention.

The blank verse, however, of Dyer calls for decided approbation; its style of composition is rich and unbroken, and its tones, in general, sweet and varied. Much as I enjoy the melody of Pope and Goldsmith, I am clearly convinced that in epic and didactic poetry, the more solemn, dignified and plastic strains of blank verse should ever be the poet's choice.

The candid relation which the Doctor has given of Akenside's opinion, should, however, mitigate the indignation which every lover of elegant literature must feel in witnessing a poem so noble in its structure and execution borne down by the weight of unjustifiable censure. Akenside was an adequate judge of the beauties or defects of the Fleece; his own versification is peculiarly harmonious, and he had studied in the same school of painting with the poet he applauds, or in other words, his scenery is much in the style of Dyer. There is, however, somewhat of elaboration and stiffness in the blank verse of Akenside which is not discoverable in the versification of Dyer.

Though from motives of justice, from a wish to rescue a genuine bard from the unmerited severity of his prejudiced Biographer, I have endeavoured to controvert the strictures of Dr. Johnson, the attempt has been conducted, I trust, without the smallest petulance, or arrogance. No man can entertain a higher idea of Johnson's intellectual powers as a Lexicographer, a Teacher and a Moralist than myself; but poetical criticism was not his province, and though in point of style, his *Lives* be superior perhaps to any of his preceding compositions, they are infinitely more disgraced by the inexorable partialities of the man. The following character of Johnson, written by a critic of true taste and acknowledged ability, strikes me as so discriminative, so accordant, for the most part, with my own opinion, that I shall close these observations on the strictures of our great Philologer by quoting it at length. "If a vigorous understanding, a comprehensive knowledge, and a capacity of sound judgment, were sufficient qualifications for a work of genuine criticism, no man was ever better furnished than he for such an undertaking; but a certain inelegance of taste, a frigid churlishness of temper, unsubdued and unqualified by that

melting sensibility, that divine enthusiasm of soul, which are essential to a hearty relish of poetical composition; and, above all, an invidious depravity of mind, warped by the most unmanly prejudices, and operating in an unrelenting antipathy to cotemporary merit, too often counteracted and corrupted the other virtues of his intellect. Nor am I under any apprehension of being charged with an unjustifiable partiality in this opinion of him, when I make no scruple to declare; that, notwithstanding some very exceptionable passages, infinitely disgraceful both to his understanding and his heart, I esteem his *Lives of the English Poets* to be the noblest specimen of entertaining and solid criticism, that modern times have produced; well worthy of ranking on the same shelf with the most distinguished of the ancients, *Aristotle* and *Quintilian*."*

Dyer had, in the early part of his life, eagerly embraced the art of painting; he had imbibed the enthusiasm of the celebrated Richardson, under whom he had placed himself for instruction, and, on leaving his roof, rambled through

* Wakefield's Notes on Gray, p. 18.

South Wales sketching the romantic and pastoral scenery of that delightful province. Not content, however, with the progress he had made in this island, he determined on a voyage to Italy, where, besides studying the inestimable remains of Antiquity, and the best productions of the greatest modern masters, he was accustomed to spend whole days in the country about Florence and Rome, transferring to paper the pictoresque beauties so profusely scattered over that classic soil.

To this attachment to, and practice of painting, which, though he afterwards assumed the clerical profession, continued through life, we owe that accuracy, fertility and warmth of description so conspicuous in all his poems. His *Grongar Hill*, his *Ruins of Rome*, and his *Fleece*, present a series of views not given in the usual florid and unmeaning style, but faithful to nature, and possessing an individuality which strongly interests.

In every poem of length, but more especially in one whose professed end is to instruct, a strict attention to method is essential. A luminous arrangement of facts, with apposite

inference and deduction, ought to be as much an object of attainment in a didactic poem as in a didactic essay in prose, and, happily, the production we are now reviewing, is as remarkable for a proper disposition and elucidation of all its various parts, as for its exquisite imagery and appropriate ornament. The four books of the Fleece are, in short, the four exact stages of the progress of an useful and national occupation, and the care of sheep, the preparation of wool, the labours of the loom, and the exportation of the manufacture, follow in a just and natural order.

Having now terminated the preliminary remarks I shall proceed to adduce such passages as may enable the reader to judge whether the encomium passed upon the work has been properly founded. Speaking of the different pastures for sheep, the poet inculcates the necessity of avoiding the shelter of numerous trees, and of clearing the ground of thorns, furze and briars, and exemplifies the utility of so doing by the relation of a fact which is closed with an exquisite picture of rural and domestic felicity.

———————I knew a careful swain,
Who gave them to the crackling flames, and spread
Their dust saline upon the deep'ning grass
And oft with labour-strengthen'd arm he delv'd
The draining trench across his verdant slopes,
To intercept the small meandering rills
Of upper hamlets: haughty trees, that sour
The shaded grass, that weaken thorn-set mounds,
And harbour villain crows, he rare allow'd:
Only a slender tuft of useful ash,
And mingled beech and elm, securely tall,
The little smiling cottage warm embow'r'd;
The little smiling cottage, where at eve
He meets his rosy children at the door,
Prattling their welcomes, and his honest wife,
With good brown cake and bacon slice, intent
To cheer his hunger after labour hard.

Book i.

The pathetic simplicity of the following lines impress us with a high idea of the author's goodness of heart, whilst the sweetness of the versification, and the beauty of the expression do him equal honour as a poet.

Ah gentle shepherd, thine the lot to tend,
Of all, that feel distress, the most assail'd,
Feeble, defenceless: lenient be thy care:

But spread around thy tend'rest diligence
In flow'ry spring-time, when the new dropt lamb,
Tott'ring with weakness by his mother's side,
Feels the fresh world about him; and each thorn,
Hillock or furrow, trips his feeble feet:
O guard his meek sweet innocence from all
Th' innumerous ills, that rush around his life;
Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons prone,
Circling the skies to snatch him from the plain;
Observe the lurking crows, beware the brake,
There the sly fox the careless minute waits;
Nor trust thy neighbour's dog, nor earth, nor sky:
Thy bosom to a thousand cares divide.
Eurus oft slings his hail; the tardy fields
Pay not their promis'd food; and oft the dam
O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,
Or fails to guard, when the bold bird of prey
Alights, and hops in many turns around,
And tires her also turning: to her aid
Be nimble, and the weakest, in thine arms,
Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,
Between the lark's note and the nightingale's
His hungry bleating still with tepid milk:
In this soft office may thy children join,
And charitable actions learn in sport.
Nor yield him to himself, ere vernal airs
Sprinkle thy little croft with daisy flow'rs:
Nor yet forget him: life has rising ills.

B. i.

Lucretius is here very happily imitated, the *artubus infirmis* of that poet being not only translated, but accompanied with additional imagery, and, toward the conclusion, the idea of teaching charity to the children by their feeding the little lamb, carries with it every moral charm.

That the english shepherd may more keenly enjoy the blessings of his temperate clime, the author has contrasted them with the severity of the polar regions, the dangers of a more fervid sky, and the wandering life of the Arabian Herdsman. Virgil in his Georgics, and Thomson in his Summer and Winter, have had recourse to similar expedients, and have given us extended descriptions of the polar and tropical parts of the globe, yet, notwithstanding this anticipation, Dyer has finished his pieces with several original and masterly touches, and the Arabian scene, a picture perfectly his own, is of great value. This, and the northern landscape I shall now transcribe.

With grateful heart, ye British swains, enjoy
Your gentle seasons and indulgent clime.
Lo, in the sprinkling clouds, your bleating hills
Rejoice with herbage, while the horrid rage

Of winter irresistable o'erwhelms
Th' Hyperborean tracts; his arrowy frosts,
That pierce through flinty rocks, the Lappian flies;
And burrows deep beneath the snowy world;
A drear abode, from rose diffusing hours,
That dance before the wheels of radiant day,
Far, far remote; where, by the squalid light
Of fœtid oil inflam'd, sea monster's spume,
Or fir-wood, glaring in the weeping vault,
Twice three slow gloomy months, with various ills
Sullen he struggles; such the love of life!
His lank and scanty herds around him press,
As, hunger-stung, to gritty meal he grinds
The bones of fish, or inward bark of trees,
Their common sustenance.

B. i.

In this strongly featured sketch, the poet, perhaps, has given too gloomy a delineation. Though, in the eyes of the British shepherd, the Laplander seem deprived of every comfort of life, yet no being possesses greater independence, or is more satisfied with the pleasures he obtains. Thomson has given a more chearful view of these simple people, and terms them a "thrice happy race." "No farmer in the milder countries of Europe can more rejoice at viewing his meadows cloathed with cheerful green, than the Laplander at the sight of his

dreary moors whitened over with the vegetable which is to be the sustenance of his herd. In these wild solitudes he passes day and night, abroad, in the bitterest inclemency of the seasons, securely wrapped in garments supplied by his faithful Rein-deer; the milk and flesh of which is his principal food, and the number his only riches. This is the pastoral life in Lapland; A striking contrast indeed to that in the soft climates of Arcadia and Sicily; yet not without its charms to the simple native, nor unprovided with subjects for descriptive poetry."* The celebrated Linneus appears to have been greatly struck with the unsophisticated life of these virtuous savages, and, in his Flora Lapponica, has introduced a passage, illustrative of their modes of existence, written with an elegance and an energy not usually discoverable in his productions. "O felix Lappo! qui in ultimo angulo mundi sic bene lates contentus et innocens. Tu nec times annonæ charitatem, nec Martis prælia, quæ ad oras tuas pervenire nequeunt, sed florentissimas Europæ provincias et urbes,

* Aikin's Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry, p. 144.

unico momento, sæpe dejiciunt delent. Tu dormis hic sub tuâ pelle ab omnibus curis, contentionibus, rixis liber, ignorans quid sit invidia. Tu nulla nosti nisi tonantis Jovis fulmina. Tu ducis innocentissimos tuos annos ultra centenarium numerum cuni facili senectute et summâ sanitate. Te latent myriades morborum nobis Europæis communes. Tu vivis in sylvis, avis instar, nec sementem facis, nec metis, tamen alit te Deus optimus optime. Tua ornamenta sunt tremula arborum folia, graminosique luci. Tuus potus aqua crystallinæ pelluciditatis, quæ nec cerebrum insaniâ adficit, nec strumas in Alpibus tuis producit. Cibus tuus est vel verno tempore piscis recens, vel æstivo serum lactis, vel autumnali tetrao, vel hiemali, caro recens rangiferina absque sale et pane, singulâ vice unico constans ferculo, edis, dum securus e lecto surgis, dumque eum petis, nec nosti venena nostra, quæ latent sub dulci melli. Te non obruit scorbutus, nec febris intermittens, nec obesitas, nec podagra, fibroso gaudes corpore et alacri, animoque libero. O sancta innocentia, estne hic tuus thronus inter Faunos in summo septentrione, inque vilissimâ habita terra? numne sic præfers stragula hæc betulina mollibus serico tectis

plumis? Sic etiam credidere veteres, nec male."

The Arabians have been shepherds from the earliest ages of the world, and have preserved their manners and customs, their liberty and dominion, with an uniformity and success which partake almost of the miraculous. Their independent simplicity of life, and the continual migration of their tribes, have furnished their native poets with many pictoresque and interesting descriptions. In our own country some attempts have been made to introduce arabian imagery into the eclogue, but we seldom meet with it in poetry of a higher cast. Dyer however has appositely interwoven into his Fleece a most delightful picture of these wandering people.

The weary Arabs roam from plain to plain,
Guiding the languid herd in quest of food;
And shift their little home's uncertain scene
With frequent farewell: strangers, pilgrims all,
As were their fathers. No sweet fall of rain
May there be heard: nor sweeter liquid lapse
Of river, o'er the pebbles gliding by
In murmurs: goaded by the rage of thirst,
Daily they journey to the distant clefts

Of craggy rocks, where gloomy palms o'erhang
The ancient wells, deep sunk by toil immense,
Toil of the patriarchs, with sublime intent
Themselves and long posterity to serve.
There, at the public hour of sultry noon,
They share the bev'rage, when to wat'ring come,
And grateful umbrage, all the tribes around,
And their lean flocks, whose various bleatings fill
The echoing caverns: then is absent none,
Fair nymph or shepherd, each inspiring each
To wit, and song, and dance, and active feats;
In the same rustic scene, where Jacob won
Fair Rachel's bossom, when a rock's vast weight
From the deep dark-mouth'd well his strength remov'd,
And to her circling sheep refreshment gave.

B. i.

The first book concludes with a description of the rural festivities at a sheep-shearing on the banks of the Severn.

Beneath each blooming arbour all is joy
And lusty merriment: while on the grass
The mingled youth in gaudy circles sport,
We think the golden age again return'd,
And all the fabled Dryades in dance.
Leering they bound along, with laughing air,
To the shrill pipe, and deep remurm'ring cords
Of th' ancient harp, or tabor's hollow sound.

While the old apart, upon a bank reclin'd,
Attend the tuneful carol, softly mixt
With every murmur of the sliding wave,
And ev'ry warble of the feather'd choir;
Music of paradise! which still is heard,
When the heart listens.———

B. i.

The close of these lines is pre-eminently beautiful. A song, which displays some elegantly moral and rural imagery, is now sung by two shepherds, and the young men and maidens, according to a custom in Wales, sprinkle the river with flowers. After the celebration of these rites they retire to a banquet, which is thus described:

——————————now the mossy bank
Is gaily circled, and the jolly chear
Dispers'd in copious measure; early fruits,
And those of frugal store, in husk or rind,
Steep'd grain, and curdled milk with dulcet cream
Soft temper'd, in full merriment they quaff,
And cast about their gibes; and some apace
Whistle to roundelays: their little ones
Look on delighted: while the mountain woods,
And winding vallies, with the various notes
Of pipe, sheep, kine, and birds, and liquid brooks,

Unite their echoes: near at hand the wide
Majestic wave of Severn slowly rolls
Along the deep-divided glebe: the flood,
And trading bark with low contracted sail,
Linger among the reeds and copsy banks
To listen, and to view the joyous scene.

B. i.

The whole of this first book may be considered as a kind of extended pastoral, interspersed with precepts relative to the rearing and tending of sheep. I know not, in the range of poetry, a subject more pregnant with all that is lovely in landscape, or engaging in simplicity of manners and sentiment.

NUMBER XIII.

——————————— tu —— nobis
Suppeditas præcepta, tuisque ex —— chartis
Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia limant,
Omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,
Aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vita.

LUCRETIUS.

THE second and third books of the Fleece have not the advantage of a theme quite so inviting as the first, but the poet has taken care to adorn them with a variety of episodic parts, some of which will be ranked among the choicest products of the muse.

After noting the superiority of the combing wool of this island, the author expresses himself anxious to prevent its fraudulent exportation; then, alluding to his clerical profession, he closes the passage with a precept of the

purest morality, and delivered in a style remarkably chaste and perspicuous.

For me, 'tis mine to pray, that men regard
Their occupations with an honest heart,
And cheerful diligence: like the useful bee,
To gather for the hive not sweets alone,
But wax, and each material; pleas'd to find
Whate'er may sooth distress, and raise the fall'n,
In life's rough race: O be it as my wish!—
For this, I wake the weary hours of rest;
With this desire, the merchant I attend;
By this impell'd, the shepherd's hut I seek,
And, as he tends his flock, his lectures hear
Attentive, pleas'd with pure simplicity,
And rules divulg'd beneficent to sheep:
Or turn the compass o'er the painted chart,
To mark the ways of traffic; Volga's stream,
Cold Hudson's cloudy streights, warm Afric's cape,
Latium's firm roads, the Ptolemean fosse,
And China's long canals; those noble works,
Those high effects of civilizing trade,
Employ me, sedulous of public weal:
Yet not unmindful of my sacred charge;
Thus also mindful, thus devising good,
At vacant seasons, oft; when evening mild
Purples the vallies, and the shepherd counts
His flock, returning to the quiet fold,
With dumb complacence: for Religion, this,

To give our ev'ry comfort to distress,
And follow virtue with an humble mind;
This pure Religion.

B. ii.

The very impressive termination of these fine lines is a copy from the last verse of the first chapter of the General Epistle of James; a verse which, for beauty of diction, for tenderness of precept, and moral, must be dear alike to virtue and to taste. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this,—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

If the latter part of the ensuing quotation be not an instance of the true sublime, I must confess myself totally ignorant of its nature. The passage in Italics conveys to my mind, images truly magnificent and great.

————————————The powerful sun
Hot India's zone with gaudy pencil paints,
And drops delicious tints o'er hill and dale,
Which Trade to us conveys. Not tints alone,
Trade to the good physician gives his balms;
Gives cheering cordials to th' afflicted heart;

Gives, to the wealthy, delicacies high;
Gives, to the curious, works of nature rare;
And when the priest displays, in just discourse,
Him, the all-wise Creator, and declares
His presence, power, and goodness, unconfin'd,
'Tis Trade, attentive voyager, who fills
His lips with argument. To censure Trade,
Or hold her busy people in contempt,
Let none presume,——————
——————————————for they
The clearest sense of Deity recieve,
Who view the widest prospect of his works,
Ranging the globe with trade thro' various climes:
Who see the signature of boundless love,
Nor less the judgments of Almighty Power,
That warn the wicked, and the wretch who 'scapes
From human justice: who, astonish'd view
Etna's loud thunders and tempestuous fires;
The dust of Cartharge; desart shores of Nile;
Or Tyre's abandoned summit, crown'd of old
With stately towr's; whose merchants, from their isles,
And radiant thrones, assembled in her marts;
Whither Arabia, whither Kedar, brought
Their shaggy goats, their flocks, and bleating lambs;
Where rich Damascus pil'd his fleeces white,
Prepar'd and thirsty for the double tint,
And flow'ring shuttle. *While th' admiring world*
Crowded her streets; ah! then the hand of pride
Sow'd imperceptible his poisonous weed,

Which crept destructive up her lofty domes,
As ivy creeps around the graceful trunk
Of some tall oak. Her lofty domes no more,
Not ev'n the ruins of her pomp remain,
Not ev'n the dust they sunk in; by the breath
Of the Omnipotent offended hurl'd
Down to the bottom of the stormy deep.

B. ii.

The five concluding lines of this extract may vie with any in English poetry; their construction is bold and striking, and the last line but one peculiarly forcible in its expression.

In treating of the different methods of spinning the poet observes that many yet adhere to the use of the ancient distaff, which, being fixed to the bosom, the spindle is cast as the person walks.

This was of old, in no inglorious days,
The mode of spinning, when th' Egyptian prince
A golden distaff gave that beauteous nymph,
Too beauteous Helen; no uncourtly gift
Then, when each gay diversion of the fair
Led to ingenious use.

B. iii.

This useful little machine has been likewise immortalised in the twenty-eighth Idyllium of Theocritus, which, accompanied with the present of an ivory distaff, is addressed to the Wife of Nicias, a Milesian Physician, and the intimate friend of the poet. It is, perhaps, the most interesting piece in the collection of the Sicilian, and places the character of Theugenis in every amiable and domestic light. The sensibility and affectionate esteem which illumine every line of this elegant production induce me to insert a portion of it in the version of Mr. Polwhele. Theocritus, conveying his instructive gift, invokes Minerva, the patroness of the Woof, to transport him safe to the towers of Nileus:

Thither we ask fair winds to waft us o'er,
  That Nicias, by the sweet-ton'd Graces blest,
Their hallow'd offspring, may with letter'd lore,
  And friendly converse charm his welcome guest.
Thee Distaff, thee of polish'd ivory fram'd,
  I bear, meet present to his lovely wife:
So shall her frugal industry be fam'd,
  The genuine model of domestic life;—
Nor would I bear thee, Distaff, to the dome,
  Where dissipation reigns, and idle mirth;

Thee who, amidst Sicilia's pasture bloom,
Tracest to Archia's city-walls thy birth,
A happier mansion be thy lot to gain,
Where lives my friend, whose health-restoring aid
Lulls with salubrious balms the throbs of pain,
And guards Miletus' sons from Pluto's shade.
Thus shall thy fair possessor rise in fame,
By thee recall to mind her tuneful guest;
And many a one, that marks thee, shall exclaim,
"Though but a trivial favour be possest,
"'Tis for the giver's sake the gift we boast,
"And what a friend bestows we value most!"

About the period of the publication of the Fleece, Work-houses for the poor had been recommended, and erected in several of the mercantile parts of the kingdom, as Bristol, Birmingham, &c. &c. On these noble institutions, which every friend to humanity would wish to see conducted upon a scale of still greater utility and extension, our worthy author, whose heart expands with delight at the prospect of the happiness they are likely to diffuse, bestows unqualified praise, and exhorts the pauper, in the following energetic strains, to avail himself of the offered blessing.

——————————Ho, ye poor, who seek,
Among the dwellings of the diligent,
For sustenance unearn'd; who stroll abroad
From house to house, with mischievous intent,
Feigning misfortune: Ho, ye lame, ye blind;
Ye languid limbs, with real want oppress'd,
Who tread the rough highways and mountains wild,
Through storms, and rains, and bitterness of heart;
Ye children of affliction, be compell'd
To happiness: the long-wish'd day-light dawns,
When charitable rigour shall detain
Your step-bruis'd feet. Ev'n now the sons of trade,
Where-e'er their cultivated hamlets smile,
Erect the mansion: here soft fleeces shine;
The card awaits you, and the comb, and wheel:
Here shroud you from the thunder of the storm;
No rain shall wet your pillow: here abounds
Pure bev'rage; here your viands are prepar'd;
To heal each sickness the physician waits,
And priest intreats to give your MAKER praise.

B. iii.

The celebration of Rivers has ever been a favorite topic with the poets, and Spenser, Drayton, Milton and Pope have vied with each other, and the ancients, in descriptions of this kind. Neither the Scamander of Homer, the Tibur of Virgil, nor the Aufidus of Horace, have received more lavish praise than the Trent,

the Severn and the Thames. With a view of the latter and its chief port terminates the third book of the Fleece; the poet, however, in tracing the progress of his manufacture through the country, in its way to the sea, has given a beautiful delineation of various smaller, though equally romantic streams, and the passage we are about to quote, especially in its close, will, with the judicious critic, possess merit of no inferior kind. After noticing the public roads along which the labours of the loom must pass, the author says, they

——————————thence explore
Through ev'ry navigable wave, the sea,
That laps the green earth round: thro' Tyne, and Tees,
Thro' Weare and Lune, and merchandising Hull,
And Swale, and Aire, whose chrystal waves reflect
The various colours of the tinctur'd web;
Thro Ken, swift rolling down his rocky dale,
Like giddy youth impetuous, then at Wick
Curbing his train, and, with the sober pace
Of cautious eld, meand'ring to the deep;
Thro' Dart, and sullen Exe, whose murm'ring wave
Envies the Dune and Rother, who have won
The serge and kersie to their blanching streams;
Through Towy, winding under Merlin's tow'rs,
And Usk, that frequent, among hoary rocks,

On her deep waters paints th' impending scene,
Wild torrents, craggs, and woods, and mountain snows.

B. iii.

The fourth book offers such a multiplicity of passages worthy of selection, that, were we not necessarily limited by the nature of our work, many sheets might be occupied in unfolding its beauties. The reader, however, must be contented with a few specimens, which are intended rather to allure him to the perusal of the entire poem than to satisfy his curiosity.

Sea views make a conspicuous figure in the first-rate productions of some of the first poets; the Odyssey and the Æneid abound with them, but the Lusiad of Camöens has, in this species of painting, far excelled the boasted efforts of antiquity. Its storms and calms are drawn with a spirit and precision which even Vandervelt has not exceeded. Among ourselves the *Shipwreck* of Falconer may be mentioned with applause, and the lately published poem of Mr. Bidlake, entitled *The Sea*, has claims to considerable notice. Dyer, also, in this part of his Fleece, has presented us with

some beautiful sea pieces of the tranquil kind; two of these demand quotation.

————In pleasing care the pilot steers
Steady; with eye intent upon the steel,
Steady, before the breeze, the pilot steers:
While gaily o'er the waves the mountain prows
Dance, like a shoal of dolphins, and begin
To streak with various paths the hoary deep.—
————————————————and now
The fluctuating world of waters wide,
In boundless magnitude, around them swells;
O'er whose imaginary brim, nor towns,
Nor woods, nor mountain tops, nor aught appears,
But Phœbus' orb, refulgent lamp of light,
Millions of leagues aloft: heav'n's azure vault
Bends over-head, majestic, to its base
Uninterrupted, clear circumference;
Till, rising o'er the flick'ring waves, the cape
Of Finisterre, a cloudy spot, appears.

B. iv.

The turn upon the words, at the commencement of these lines, has a pleasing effect; Milton has frequently and judiciously made use of the same ornament, which, if it be not too ostentatiously employed, will ever delight. The latter part of the extract is an example of that calm sublimity which elevates and expands

the mind without exciting the passions, or occasioning the smallest tumult or agitation.

A portion of the following description has ever been considered as an admirable instance of the adaptation of the sound to the sense; and though, in many cases, this beauty be perfectly imaginary, in the present, I think, it will be allowed, as far as possible, to have been exemplified.

See, through the fragrance of delicious airs,
That breathe the smell of balms, how traffic shapes
A winding voyage, by the lofty coast
Of Sofala, thought Ophir, in whose hills
Ev'n yet some portion of its ancient wealth
Remains, and sparkles in the yellow sand
Of its clear streams, though unregarded now;
Ophirs more rich are found. *With easy course*
The vessels glide; unless their speed be stopp'd
By dead calms, that oft lie on those smooth seas
While ev'ry zephyr sleeps: then the shrouds drop;
The downy feather, on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat sea shines like yellow gold,
Fus'd in the fire; or like the marble floor
Of some old temple wide. But where so wide
In old or later time, its marble floor
Did ever temple boast as this, which here

Spreads its bright level many a league around?
At solemn distances its pillars rise,
Sofala's blue rocks, Mozambic's palmy steeps,
And lofty Madagascar's glittering shores.
B. iv.

The infamous *slave-trade* meets, as it justly deserves, the poet's reprobation. At a time when this indelible blot upon our species had not been rendered so conspicuous for its atrocity as lately it hath been, through the well-directed efforts of the good and wise, our amiable author viewed it with indignant abhorrence: surveying the coast of Guinea he exclaims:

——————————————The trade
Along this barb'rous coast, in telling wounds
The gen'rous heart, the sale of wretched slaves;
——————————————wickedness is blind!
Their sable chieftains may in future times
Burst their frail bonds, and vengeance execute
On cruel unrelenting pride of heart
And av'rice. There are ills to come for crimes!
B. iv.

No British Bard, however, on this subject, has equalled the nervous language of Dr. Dar-

win, who, in his *Botanic Garden*, in lines, which, for strength of imagery and energy of appeal, excite the warmest admiration, thus proclaims the miseries of violated humanity:

Hark! heard ye not that piercing cry,
Which shook the waves and rent the sky!—
E'en now, e'en now, on yonder Western shores
Weeps pale Despair, and writhing Anguish roars:
E'en now in Afric's groves with hideous yell
Fierce Slavery stalks, and slips the dogs of hell;
From vale to vale the gathering cries rebound,
And sable nations tremble at the sound!——
——YE BANDS OF SENATORS! whose suffrage sways
Britannia's realms, whom either Ind obeys;
Who right the injur'd, and reward the brave,
Stretch your strong arm, for ye have power to save!
Thron'd in the vaulted heart, his dread resort,
Inexorable CONSCIENCE holds his court;
With still small voice the plots of Guilt alarms,
Bares his mask'd brow, his lifted hand disarms;
But, wrapp'd in night with terrors all his own,
He speaks in thunder, when the deed is done.
Hear him, ye Senates! hear this truth sublime,
"HE WHO ALLOWS OPPRESSION, SHARES THE CRIME." *

* Botanic Garden, p. 131.

To tyrants of every species Dyer was a determined foe, and seizes every opportunity, not only of lashing these brutalisers of mankind, but of praising the mild constitution and laws of his native country. Many diffusive instances of this patriotism might be selected, but the introduction of Britain at the close of the following quotation, when mentioning the ports of Surat, Goa and Bombay is so strikingly beautiful, and in so concise yet in so forcible a manner interests our feelings, that I give it the preference to more elaborate detail.

But what avails, or many ports or few?
Where wild ambition frequent from his lair
Starts up; while fell revenge and famine lead
To havoc, reckless of the tyrant's whip,
Which clanks along the vallies: oft in vain
The merchant seeks upon the strand, whom erst,
Associated by trade he deck'd and cloath'd;
In vain, whom rage or famine has devour'd,
He seeks; and with encreas'd affection thinks
On Britain.——

B. iv.

The route of the trading caravans from Petersburgh to Pekin next leads the poet through a vast variety of nations differing

essentially in their manners, customs and climate, and he has happily availed himself of these particulars in many a sketch of animate and inanimate nature. On their leaving on the right the flowery realms bordering on the Caspian Lake, he recollects, with sorrow, they are

——————————The haunt
Of arbitrary rule, where regions wide
Are destin'd to the sword; and on each hand
Roads hung with carcases, or under foot
Thick strewn; while in *their rough bewilder'd vales,*
The blooming rose its fragrance breathes in vain,
And silver fountains fall, and nightingales
Attune their notes where none are left to hear.
B. iv.

The tenderly-pleasing thought in these last four lines has been a great favorite with our poets, thus Pope:

Like roses that in deserts bloom and die.
Rape of the Lock, iv. 157.

a similar idea is met with in Thomson and Gray:

———— realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful deserts, worlds of solitude,

Where the sun smiles, and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen and unenjoyed.

Summer, 847.

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Elegy, v. 55.

Dyer's description is, after all, perhaps, the most full and pathetic.

In passing through the territory of the Ostiac Tartars, a people immersed in the most savage barbarism, and indolent to an extreme, the author expatiates on their wretched state.

——————————Miserable tribe
Void of commercial comforts: who, nor corn,
Nor pulse, nor oil, nor heart-enliv'ning wine,
Know to procure; nor spade, nor scythe, nor share,
Nor social aid: beneath their thorny bed
The serpent hisses, while in thickets nigh
Loud howls the hungry wolf.

B. iv

After this bold and animated passage he immediately proceeds to mark the further progress of the caravans, and presents us with a piece of scenery whose chief features are those of mingled terror and sublimity.

——————So on they fare,
And pass by spacious lakes, begirt with rocks
And azure mountains; and the heights admire
Of white Imaus, whose snow-nodding craggs
Frighten the realms beneath, and from their urns
Pour mighty rivers down, th' impetuous streams
Of Oby, and Irtis, and Jenisca swift,
Which rush upon the northern pole upheave
Its frozen seas, and lift their hills of ice.

B. iv.

Were it necessary many more quotations of equal beauty with the preceding, might be given, for I may justly say, there is scarce a page in the whole poem, but what conveys, directly, or indirectly, some interesting sentiment, or illustrative imagery; even in the most didactic parts, the close of a paragraph generally introduces a picture which rivets attention, and throws such a glow of animation over the precept, that he must be fastidious indeed, who is not delighted with the poet's art. Two or three of these miniature sketchings, as furnishing a strong idea of the author's mode of embellishing the dryest portions of his subject, I shall now transcribe. Treating of the different value of the fleeces, he mentions those which have been injured by the moth, and observes

————————————Our ancestors
Selected such for hospitable beds
To rest the stranger, or the gory chief,
From battle or the chase of wolves return'd.
B ii.

The cotton groves of India he remarks produce mere luxuries, mere "gauds and dresses of fantastic web,"

————————————but our kinder toils
Give cloathing to necessity; keep warm
Th' unhappy wand'rer, on the mountain wild
Benighted, while the tempest beats around.
B. iii.

He advises the merchant to neglect not even trifles, for that from highly-finished labour, they are frequently held in great estimation.

Nor what the peasant, near some lucid wave,
Pactolus, Simöis, or Meander slow,
Renown'd in story, with his plow upturns,
Neglect; the hoary medal, and the vase,
Statue and bust, of old magnificence
Beautiful reliques!————
B. iv.

Inculcating the necessity of varying the merchandise according to the varied modes and

wants of mankind, he enforces his precept with this among other instances:

Nor frequent are the freights of snow-white woofs,
Since Rome, no more the mistress of the world,
Varies her garb, and treads her darken'd streets
With gloomy cowl, majestical no more.

B. iv.

Such is the poem which the tasteless criticism of Dr. Johnson has contributed to plunge into neglect.

The exquisite specimens however, which we have now brought forward, will, it is to be hoped, induce many readers of the *Literary Hours* to pay due attention to the volume of Dyer; they will find it written in a true classical style, and with several happy imitations of the ancients. But let it be recollected that the beautiful and elaborate effusions of genius, pregnant with classical and historical allusion, and chastised by refined taste, are not to be understood, or relished from a superficial perusal. To form an estimate of excellencies such as these, reiterated efforts, and no small portion of poetical erudition will be found essential;

an enjoyment, however, of the highest rank awaits him who studiously elevates his mind to a perception of the noblest energies of imagination, and to a keen sense of the finer beauties of composition.

From such the Fleece of Dyer, having once obtained attention, will receive its long-delayed reward, nor, though mingled, like every human work, with occasional error, has it much to apprehend from the most acute yet candid critic.

NUMBER XIV.

———————————The time
When Superstition cherish'd every crime;
When "barb'rous" Priests pronounc'd with falt'ring tongue,
Nor knew to read the jargon which they sung;
When Nobles, train'd like blood-hounds to destroy,
In ruthless rapine plac'd their savage joy;
And Monarchs wanted ev'n the skill to frame
The letters that compos'd their mighty name.

HAYLEY.

DURING the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, while on the banks of the Thames, the Tiber and the Seine, a profound and almost impenetrable darkness hovered, those of the Tigris were lighted up by the splendor of science and of literature. To contrast and to describe the leading features of these periods, the superstitious ignorance of Christian Europe with

the literary energy and magnificence of the eastern world, will perhaps afford no unentertaining sketch, nor one unproductive of salutary reflection.

Upon the demolition of the western empire in the sixth century of the Christian era, its rude and untutored conquerors, hurrying over the most fertile parts of Europe, ignorant of letters, and altogether addicted to the love and exercise of arms, soon utterly neglected whatever remained of the taste, of the literature and elegance of the Roman; and to cut off all resource, all speedy probability of dispelling so dreadful a gloom, the Arabians, in the course of a few years after this event, headed by the daring and enthusiastic Mahomet, rushed from their savage deserts to enforce the precepts of his religion, and, under his immediate successors, rashly dared to consume the invaluable library of Alexandria, the rich deposit of whatever the best and wisest of the ancient world had been amassing for ages.

Thus, within the space of a hundred years, every vestige of human learning was nearly destroyed, and a barbaric ignorance, which

attained its height during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, degraded Europe. In these latter periods, with one exception or two, every species of tyranny which could deform humanity, and every superstition which could debase the light of human reason, universally prevailed, and from Christianity mingled with barbarism, the rights of the priesthood with those of the empire, the prerogative of the sovereign with that of the nobility, such anarchy and confusion arose, as altogether impeded the diffusion of letters. Among the clergy also, where literature more especially ought to have been cherished, an ignorance the most excessive was to be found, and it is not uncommon to discover in the deeds of a synod, a sentence like the following: "As my lord the bishop cannot write himself, at his request I have subscribed." Even Charlemagne, that far-fam'd monarch, the theme of minstrels, and the hero of romance, was unable to write his own name, and forty-five years of his life elapsed ere he attempted any progress in literature.

What materially contributed to quench the last glimmerings of philosophy and science, was

the extreme scarcity of books; in this island what libraries had been left by the Romans, were destroyed by the ravages of the Picts and Saxons, and the search for, and the purchase of them upon the continent, were attended with great fatigue and enormous expence. In the year 690, king Aldfred gave an estate of eight hides, or as much land as eight plows could labour, to Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremonth in Northumberland, for a single volume on cosmography,* and at Rome their value was equally extravagant.† In France likewise, Louis the eleventh was obliged to deposit a considerable quantity of plate, and to get one of his nobility to join with him in a bond, under a high penalty, to restore it, before he could procure the loan of one volume which may now be purchased for a few shillings.|| Independent, however, of the difficulty in acquiring manuscripts, not the least desire or inclination for study prevailed in these unhappy periods. In the ancient capitol of the world itself, the lamp of science

* Bed. Hist. Abbat. Wermuthen. p. 297, 8.

† Murator. Antiq. tom. 3, p. 811.

|| Hist. de Louis xi. par Comines, t. 4, p. 281.

was expiring, and the plainest rules of grammar, the first rudiments of letters, even among those who pretended to extraordinary information, were unknown. The vilest wretches that ever disgraced humanity filled the papal throne during the tenth century, alike ignorant of literature as of moral rectitude. "O miserable Rome!" exclaims a contemporary writer, "thou that formerly didst hold out so many great and glorious luminaries to our ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art thou now fallen, which will render thee infamous to all succeeding ages." ‡ In France, in the eighth century, Charlemagne could not find a single teacher of the liberal arts, nor did she improve in this respect during the two succeeding ages, and in Christian Spain they were compelled to issue canons against ordaining men priests or bishops who could neither read, nor sing psalms. Three or four beautiful lights, however, in this gloomy and dark-shaded picture should not be omitted; Bede, Alcuin and Charlemagne in the eighth, and Alfred in the ninth century, were possessed of extraordinary

‡ Arnoldus Orleanensis, apud du Pin, Hist. Eccles. cent. 10.

genius; men whom history has delighted to hold up to our admiration, whom it has, embalmed with grateful praise, and whose abilities, as brilliant as they were solid, burst through that cloud of ignorance with a splendor that dazzled, though they failed to inform, the understandings of their contemporaries. They were, in fact, but as meteors that flash on the surrounding gloom, are gazed at for a moment with stupid wonder, and are then lost in the darkness of returning night. "The death of Beda," says William of Malmsbury, "was fatal to learning and particularly to history; insomuch that it may be said, that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to our times." § "At my accession to the throne," (A. D. 871) observes Alfred, "all knowledge and learning were extinguished in the English nation: insomuch that there were very few to the south of the Humber who understood the common prayers of the church, or were capable of translating a single sentence of Latin into English; but to the south of the Thames, I cannot recollect so

§ W. Malms. l. i. c. 3.

much as one who could do this." * After the death of this incomparable man, the torch of science, which he had taken so much pains to relumine, was totally extinguished, and the demon of ignorance and superstition spread her dreadful pall over the barbarous sons of prostrate Europe. "We now enter," complains Baronius, "on the history of an age, which, for its barbarism and wickedness, may be called the age of iron; for its dulness and stupidity, the age of lead; and for its blindness and ignorance, the age of darkness." ‡ "The tenth century," says Genebrard, "is commonly and justly called the unhappy age; for it was almost quite destitute of men of genius and learning, had few great princes or good prelates, and hardly any thing was performed in it that merits the attention of posterity." †

The dreadful devastation of the Danes previous to the reign of, and after the demise of Alfred, and the original contempt of the ancient Germans and Saxons for literature, undoubt-

* Spelman Vita Alfredi, append, 3, p. 196.

‡ Baron. Annal. ad an. 900.

† Genebrard, p. 552.

edly operated considerably in producing this deplorable defalcation of knowledge; but the degraded state of christianity, which consisted merely in the accumulation of relics, the performance of pilgrimage to Rome, and in monastic seclusion, accompanied with the most stupid credulity, was of itself sufficient to annihilate all energy of mind, for, by depreciating science, and requiring implicit faith in the most wretched and absurd doctrines and legends, all discrimination of truth and record, all the sources of history and philosophy, all power and wish to detect error, however gross, were effectually destroyed, and the nobler faculties of the mind laid waste and crushed beneath the iron hand of ecclesiastic tyranny.

The liberal and benevolent spirit of our religion, which, when rightly understood, conduces both to our present and our future happiness, was thus perverted and debased, and became in the hands of these stupid fanatics a chief mean in poisoning the best and sweetest blessings of society. Monastic life, whether considered in regard to the male or female character, appears equally contrary to sound reason and morality, for as the very first

principles of moral and religious duty consist in our relative conduct, in our mutual endeavours to assist each other and improve society, such a seclusion, it is evident, must be directly calculated to overthrow whatever nature has ordained should be our chief pursuits; and the monstrous catalogue of enormities with which the early history of these monasteries is deformed, clearly proves how derogatory they are to the rights of mankind, how destructive of the very ends for which they were erected, how productive of wretchedness and guilt. Not only the clergy of these times fled into these nests of sloth and superstition, but kings, queens and nobles without number abandoned the world, quitted their country as governors and protectors, to dream out their days and be interred near the reliques of some favorite saint. Several individuals even, deserting their families and friends, fled into perpetual solitude, where, actuated by the most absurd enthusiasm, they inflicted upon themselves, as due to the conceived enormity of their transgressions, every species of punishment and self-denial, all the sufferings of poverty and guilt. The most singular instance perhaps in the world of self-inflicted, severe and long

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continued suffering, occasioned by enthusiasm of this kind, took place during the fifth century, in Syria, and seems to have given birth to the nearly similar extravagancies that for several centuries afterwards disgraced the provinces of Europe. "Simeon Stylites at the age of thirteen, deserted the profession of a shepherd, and threw himself into an austere monastery. After a long and painful noviciate, in which Simeon was repeatedly saved from pious suicide, he established his residence on a mountain, about thirty or forty miles to the east of Antioch. Within the space of a *mandra*, or circle of stones, to which he had attached himself by a ponderous chain, he ascended a column, which was successively raised from the height of nine, to that of sixty feet, from the ground. In this last, and lofty station, the Syrian Anchorite resisted the heat of thirty summers, and the cold of as many winters. Habit and exercise instructed him to maintain his dangerous situation without fear or giddiness, and successively to assume the different postures of devotion. He sometimes prayed in an erect attitude, with his outstretched arms, in the figure of a cross; but his most familiar practice was that of bending

his meagre skeleton from the forehead to the feet: and a curious spectator, after numbering twelve hundred and forty four repetitions, at length desisted from the endless account. The progress of an ulcer in his thigh might shorten, but it could not disturb, this celestial life; and the patient Hermit expired, without descending from his column."*

This custom so ridiculous in itself, and founded upon an error so glaring, has continued, with the features indeed somewhat softened, until nearly the present period. During the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the hermit, although he did not retire to the savage and unexplored desert, though he did not expose his naked body, festering with ulcers from the consequence of his own rigid discipline, to the injuries of the weather, yet he equally contemned society, though to enjoy, perhaps, a spot rich in beautiful and sequestered scenery, where giving way to a mind, either heated by religious fervor, or soured by misfortune and perfidy, he spent his

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. vi. 8vo. edition, p. 265.

days in indolence and prayer. Such a solitary situation our amiable and romantic poet has thus graphically drawn:

A little lowly hermitage it was
  Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
  In traveill to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
  Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and eventyde;
  Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

SPENSER.

There were no crimes in these periods, however enormous, but what might be expiated by purchased absolutions, or by pilgrimages; murders and pollutions of all kinds were thus absolved, and few thought themselves safe, or secure of the joys of heaven, without having paid their devotions at the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul; "for such reasons," says Dr. Henry, "kings, queens, nobles, prelates, monks, nuns, saints, and sinners, wise men and fools, were impatient to undertake these religious journies; and all the roads between Rome and England were constantly crowded

with English pilgrims. It appears indeed, that the morals of these superstitious vagabonds, especially of the ladies, were not much improved by these peregrinations. Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, an Englishman, in a letter which he wrote to Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 745, exhorts him,—"to prevent such great numbers of English nuns from going on pilgrimages to Rome; because so many of them lose their virtue before they return, that there is hardly a city or town in Lombardy, France, or Gaul, in which there are not some English women who live by prostitution, to the great reproach of your church." It is not impossible, that these ladies, being certain of a plenary remission of all their sins when they arrived at their journey's end, might think there could be no great harm in adding a little to the number of them by the way."‡ Many of these pilgrimages were undertaken for the sake of procuring relics, which in this period were considered of inestimable value, enclosed in caskets of gold and silver, and bestowed on their happy pos-

‡ Henry's History of Great Britain, vol. iv. 8vo, edit. p. 303.

sessor a title to the veneration and almost worship of his contemporaries; scarce any crime was shrunk from provided it led to the acquisition of these precious articles, and a rotten bone, or a rusty nail, the thumb of an apostle, or a lock of the hair of Mary the mother of God, obtained by falshood, theft or robbery, were held dear as existence itself, and thought capable of absolving the purloiner from all enormity in the means made use of for their acquirement. Nothing, in fact, can be more astonishing than the credulity and infatuation of Christian Europe during these dark ages; the most monstrous and absurd tales of apparitions and miracles, of enchantments and visions, were firmly confided in, and of these a large collection might be made, a singular, though perhaps not an unentertaining monument of the strange folly of our ancestors. One of the most respectable of our ancient Historians, William of Malmsbury, has recorded the following miracle as an indisputable fact, related in the very words, he says, of the persons on whom it was wrought, and of which a formal deed, relating the particulars, and attesting the truth, was drawn up and subscribed by bishop Peregrine, the successor of

Hubert. "I Ethelbert, a sinner, will give a true relation of what happened to me on the day before Christmas, A. D. 1012, in a certain village where there was a church dedicated to St. Magnus the martyr, that all men may know the danger of disobeying the commands of a priest. Fifteen young women, and eighteen young men, of which I was one, were dancing and singing in the church-yard, when one Robert, a priest, was performing mass in the church, who sent us a civil message, intreating us to desist from our diversion, because we disturbed his devotion by our noise. But we impiously disregarded his request; upon which the holy man, inflamed with anger, prayed to God and St. Magnus, that we might continue dancing and singing a whole year without intermission. His prayers were heard. A young man, the son of a priest, named John, took his sister, who was singing with us, by the hand, and her arm dropped from her body without one drop of blood following. But, notwithstanding this disaster, she continued to dance and sing with us a whole year. During all that time we felt no inconveniency from rain, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, or weariness, and neither our shoes, nor our clothes wore out.

Whenever it began to rain, a magnificent house was erected over us by the power of the Almighty. By our continual dancing we wore the earth so much, that by degrees we sunk into it up to the knees, and at length up to the middle. When the year was ended, bishop Hubert came to the place, dissolved the invisible ties by which our hands had been so long united, absolved us, and reconciled us to St. Magnus. The priest's daughter, who had lost her arm, and other two of the young women, died away immediately; but all the rest fell into a profound sleep, in which they continued three days and three nights; after which they arose, and went up and down the world, publishing this true and glorious miracle, and carrying the evidences of its truth along with them, in the continual shaking of their limbs."†

This passion for the marvellous in religion, though mingled with more wildness of fancy and poetical invention, continued some centuries, for Giraldus Cambrensis, one of the most learned and intelligent authors of the twelfth century, "tells us of a devil who acted

† W. Malms. p. 38. b. ii. c. 10.

a considerable time as a gentleman's butler with great prudence and probity; and of another who was a very diligent and learned clergyman, and a mighty favorite of his archbishop. This last clerical devil was, it seems, an excellent historian, and used to divert the archbishop with telling him old stories. One day when he was entertaining the archbishop with a relation of ancient histories and surprising events, the conversation happened to turn on the incarnation of our Saviour. Before the incarnation, said our historian, the devils had great power over mankind; but after that event their power was much diminished, and they were obliged to fly. Some of them threw themselves into the sea; some concealed themselves in hollow trees, or in the clefts of rocks; and I myself plunged into a certain fountain. As soon as he had said this, finding that he had discovered his secret, his face was covered with blushes, he went out of the room, and was no more seen."* The same historian, likewise, in his topography of Ireland, relates, that "when St. Kewen was one day praying with

* Henry's History of Great Britain, vol. vi. p. 343. Girald. Cambr. Hin. Cambr. l. i. c. 12. p. 853.

both his hands held up to heaven, out of the window of his chamber, a swallow laid an egg in one of them; and such was the patience and good nature of the saint, that he neither drew in nor shut his hand till the swallow had built her nest, laid all her eggs, and hatched her young. To preserve the remembrance of this fact, every statue of St. Kewen in Ireland hath a swallow in one of its hands."‡

Excessive credulity is ever the companion of ignorance, and the specimens I have given, and a multitude of others still more absurd might be adduced, sufficiently prove, that a love of the marvellous the most gross and stupid, unmingled with those sallies of fancy and mythology, that spirit of invention and fabling which, in succeeding centuries, engage alike the imagination of the poet, and the research of the philosopher, was the unhappy characteristic of this gloomy era; to such an incredible length indeed, were superstition and folly sometimes carried, that in several churches, especially at Rouen, a ceremony was performed called the feast of the ass, at which

‡ Topographia Hiberniæ, c. 28. p. 727.

the ass, richly drest, was placed before the altar, and the infatuated people sung before him the following exquisite anthem: "Eh, eh, eh, sire Ane! eh, eh, eh, sire Ane!"

As curious as they were credulous, the inhabitants of Europe at this time, and of the northern nations in particular, supported a train of magicians, diviners, and fortune-tellers, to whom they resorted upon any emergency, anxious either to avert present misfortune, or to penetrate into futurity. Many of these were old women, personages of high estimation among the Anglo Saxons and Danes, and in whom they conceived a portion of the divinity to reside. These venerable and withered hags travelled with much state and with a large retinue of servants, and those princes and nobles who invited them to their houses for the purpose of exercising their profession, treated them with the utmost deference and attention. Bartholin has given a genuine and very curious description of an interview of this kind, which, as it throws much light upon the manners of this period, and is indeed a singular picture of their simplicity, curiosity, and credulity, I shall venture to transcribe. "There was in

the same country an old woman named *Thorbiorga*, the only survivor of nine sisters, fortune-tellers, who was very famous for her knowledge of futurity, and frequented public entertainments for the exercise of her art when she was invited. Earl Thorchill, who had the greatest authority in that country, and was most desirous to know when the famine and sickness, which then raged, would come to an end, sent messengers to invite Thorbiorga to his house, after he had made all the preparations which were usual for the reception of such an honourable guest. In particular, a seat was prepared for the prophetess, raised some steps above the other seats, and covered with a cushion stuffed with hen's feathers. When she arrived on an evening conducted by the messengers, she was dressed in a gown of green cloth, buttoned from top to bottom; had a string of glass beads about her neck, and her head covered with the skin of a black lamb, lined with the skin of a white cat: her shoes were made of a calf's skin, with the hair on it, tied with thongs, and fastened with brass buttons: on her hands she had a pair of gloves of a white cat's skin, with the fur inward: about her waist she wore a Hunlandic girdle,

at which hung a bag, containing her magical instruments; and she supported her feeble limbs by leaning on a staff adorned with many knobs of brass. As soon as she entered the hall, the whole company arose, as it became them, and saluted her in the most respectful manner; which she returned as she thought proper. Earl Thorchill then advanced, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the seat prepared for her. After some time spent in conversation, a table was set before her covered with many dishes; but she eat only of a pottage of goat's milk, and of a dish which consisted of the hearts of various animals. When the table was removed, Thorchill humbly approached the prophetess, and asked her what she thought of his house, and of his family; and when she would be pleased to tell them what they desired to know. To this she replied, that she would tell them nothing that evening, but would satisfy them fully next day. Accordingly on the day after, when she had put all her implements of divination in proper order, she commanded a maiden, named *Godreda*, to sing the magical song called *Vardlokur;* which she did with so clear and sweet a voice, that the whole company were

ravished with her music, and none so much as the prophetess; who cried out, Now I know many things concerning this famine and sickness which I did not know before. This famine will be of short continuance, and plenty will return with the next season, which will be favorable; and the sickness also will shortly fly away. As for you, my lovely maid Godreda, you shall be married to a nobleman of the highest rank, and become the happy mother of a numerous and flourishing family. After this, the whole company approached the prophetess one by one, and asked her what questions they pleased, and she told them every thing that they desired to know."*

It will readily be imagined that in an age so incapable of ascertaining truth of any kind, the sciences would receive little or no cultivation; in short, it may with propriety be said, they had none; their grammar, rhetoric and logic were despicable in the extreme, and in the place of astronomy, astrology, divination, and witchcraft croud upon our view. Of geography and chronology they had no idea,

* Erin's Rauga Saga, apud Bartholin, p. 691.

for their monks and pilgrims, their only travellers, journeyed merely in pursuit of relics, and had no conception of ascertaining the position of the countries through which they passed. Indeed after the fall of the Roman empire the connection between its former provinces was totally dissolved: severed among a number of hostile and illiterate barbarians, the geography of Europe was lost, and the inhabitants of one province were perfectly ignorant of the situation and extent of its immediate neighbour: intercourse of all kinds among these nations completely subsided, and the districts of the western world were to each other as *terræ incognitæ*.

The arts, though cultivated in this period with more assiduity than literature and science, were still in a very rude and imperfect state. Agriculture and pasturage, as necessary to existence, could not be greatly neglected, but architecture was almost unknown; scarce a fabric of brick or stone was to be found in England during these three centuries, the houses being altogether, and most of the churches and monasteries, built of wood, and thatched with reeds. As a proof of this, after the middle of

the tenth century, Edgar the Peaceable, on his accession to the throne, exclaims, that all the monasteries in England were in a ruinous condition, and consisted only of rotten boards.† Alfred's most magnificent building, his monastery of Æthelingey, the admiration and wonder of the age, was constructed only of wood. Sculpture and painting could scarce be said to give even a tolerable representation of nature animate or inanimate; slaves, however as they were to the corruptors of christianity, they certainly had attained sufficient excellence for the employment they were destined to. Poetry indeed had not altogether ceased to breathe its magic influence, nor the art and its professors to excite admiration. Had the productions of the bards been adequate to the encouragement and honours they received, we should, most probably, have been able to display some splendid specimens of their talents, but they had greatly degenerated from their predecessors, and though their barbarous effusions had power to delight a rude and ignorant people, they are unworthy of the notice of more polished periods, otherwise than

† W. Malms. lib. ii. p. 32.

as occasionally conveying some historical information, or elucidating the manners and customs of their age. If we can credit the authenticity of the works of Ossian, a strain of the most pathetic and sublime poetry was known to this island long before the arrival of the Saxons; and from the mountains of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland descended, in the fifth century, the wild and heroic fictions of the *Edda*, while about the same time flourished in Wales, the renowned Taliesin, and his celebrated brother poets Ancurin, Cian, Llewellyn &c. The songs of these venerable and romantic bards are said to have achieved the most astonishing effects, to have inspired valour or compassion, joy or sorrow, magnanimity or revenge at pleasure, and from the reliques of their genius we now possess, it must be affirmed, that they were imbued with the genuine spirit of poetic enthusiasm. But during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, though a love for poetry still existed, and Alfred, Aldhem, and a few other extraordinary men gave every incitement toward its cultivation, their efforts were ineffectual to produce excellence, and poetry partook of the general

imbecillity that during these unfortunate periods degraded Europe. The art of war, unhappily for mankind, too much an object of attention in the dark ages, being destructive of rather than capable of promoting literature or science, I shall pass over without further notice, and hasten to conclude, what the history of such ages must be deemed, the unpleasant part of our subject.

From the brief review we have now taken of the state of Christian Europe during this dismal portion of its annals, it will not be too harsh to say, that a superstition the most gross, a credulity the most excessive, an ignorance almost total with regard to literature and science, are its leading features; and, in conformity to this gloomy picture, all historians have agreed in branding it with every epithet imagination could suggest as adequate to express their sense of its barbarism and degradation; turning, therefore, from an object so humiliating to the lover of letters and of civilized life, let us devote our attention to the more fertile regions of the east, where, during a great part of this period, the Caliphat of the

Abassides, in all its height of splendor, in all its luxury of literature, offers to the view the charm of contrast. Our succeeding sketch will therefore attempt a delineation of the court of Bagdad, and a transient survey of the Ommiades of Spain, who, whilst Christian Europe was immersed in ignorance and sloth greatly encouraged all that was beneficial and ornamental to human life.

NUMBER XV.

Such the gay splendor, the luxurious state,
Of *Caliphs* old, who on the *Tygris'* shore
In mighty *Bagdad*, populous and great,
Held their bright court, where was of ladies store;
And verse, love, music still the garland wore.

THOMSON.

AT the commencement of the eighth century of the christian era, the empire of the Caliphs was of immense extent, stretching from the confines of India to the shores of the Atlantic ocean. Over this vast tract a similarity of religion diffused a similarity of manners and opinions, and became a bond of union to the various, but otherwise discordant, nations, on its surface, and the inhabitants of Bagdad and Cordova, of Cairo and Samarcand, were alike believers in the mission of the Prophet, and in the eternity of the Koran. Uncircumscribed

in prerogative, uncontrouled by nobles, or commons, combining the sacerdotal and the regal functions, the caliphs reigned the most powerful monarchs on the globe.

That *There Is Only One God*, was the salutary and eternal truth imprinted by Mohammed on the minds of the rudest Idolators, and prayer, fasting and alms were the duties he enjoined; the simplicity of his doctrine and precepts has never been corrupted, and in the splendid dome of St. Sophia as in the humble tabernacle erected by the hands of the Prophet, the pure creed of Islam is preserved and professed inviolate. To the Son of Abdallah the Arabs were indebted for an union of action and sentiment of which they had no conception in any age previous to his existence; their idols, the causes of religious difference, always the most implacable, "were broken before the the throne of God," and a system of rewards and punishments admirably adapted to their ignorance and appetites, stimulated the enthusiasm, and inflamed the imagination of these lords of the desert. Their valour was now solely directed against the unbelievers, and the sword of the Prophet, resistless as his tenets of

fate and predestination, flashed terror to the hearts of his opponents; "a drop of blood" says the martial apostle, "shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven: at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim." Fired by representations such as these, and by the powerful temptations of a sensual paradise, the roving tribes of Arabia awakened from their inglorious and solitary independence, coalesced, and with the view of extirpating polytheism, conquered half the globe. Greatly however as the Koran owes its extension to the power of the sword, it can boast of a morality very pure; the mild virtues of hospitality and charity are inculcated as indispensable duties, and its doctrines of the unity and perfections of the deity, and of a resurrection to immortal life, are at once rational and sublime. The Musulman who wishes to be respectable must fulfil the law of bestowing a tenth of his property, and, by strict temperance and frequent ablution, prepare his soul and body in con-

formity to the commands of God and his apostle; and though the idea of a carnal paradise has called forth the indignation of the Ascetic, yet has the Prophet expressly declared that all meaner happiness of this kind will be abjured and despised by those holy men who shall be admitted to the beatitude of the divine vision. Let us consider moreover, that from the rational faith and practice of Islam, all worship of saints, martyrs, relics and images, all mystery and metaphysical subtlety, all monastic seclusion, and enthusiastic pennance, were banished, and that it superseded the idolatrous worship of the Caaba, the rites of Sabianism, and the altars of Zoroaster.

After these cursory remarks on the religion of Mohammed, I shall proceed to the more immediate purposes of this paper, and give a short account of the magnificence and manners, literature and science of the Caliphats of Bagdad and Cordova, during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, a period in which christian Europe, as we have seen, was immersed in the profoundest ignorance and superstition.— Upon the expulsion of the Ommiades, Almansor, the second Caliph of the race of Abbas,

not willing to reside at Damascus, the former capitol of the house of Ommiah, laid the foundations of Bagdad A. D. 762, the seat of his posterity during a reign of five hundred years. Nearly about the same time A. D. 755, Abdalrahman, a royal youth of the race of the Ommiades, escaping from the proscription of his kindred, took refuge in Spain, was received with triumph by the people of Andalusia, and after a glorious struggle, planted the throne of Cordova, and gave origin to the Ommiades of Spain, under whose prosperous sway this country attained a population and fertility which has not since been equalled.

Bagdad was built on the eastern bank of the Tigris, and its population during the ninth century was so great that the funeral of a popular saint might be attended by eight hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women of Bagdad and the neighbouring villages. Here, amid the luxuries of the east, the once temperate and simple Caliphs of Arabia, aspired to rival and to surpass the magnificence of the Persian Kings. The treasure left by Almansor, amounting to thirty millions sterling, was in a few years exhausted by the munificence

and ostentation of his children, and his son Mahadi, in a single pilgrimage to Mecca, expended six millions of dinars of gold. "A pious and charitable motive," observes the Historian of the Roman Empire, "may sanctify the foundation of cisterns and caravanseras, which he distributed along a measured road of seven hundred miles; but his train of camels, laden with snow, could serve only to astonish the natives of Arabia, and to refresh the fruits and liquors of the royal banquet. The courtiers would surely praise the liberality of his grandson Almamon, who gave away four fifths of the income of a province, a sum of two millions four hundred thousand gold dinars, before he drew his foot from the stirrup. At the nuptials of the same prince, a thousand pearls of the largest size were showered on the head of the bride, and a lottery of lands and houses displayed the capricious bounty of fortune."* In the tenth century the magnificence and glories of the court had encreased, while the vital strength and power of the Caliphat were gradually diminishing. A. D. 917

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. x, 36. 37.

an embassy was received at Bagdad from the Greek Emperor of Constantinople, "and the Caliph's whole army" says Abulfeda, "both horse and foot, was under arms, which together made a body of one hundred and sixty thousand men. His state-officers, the favorite slaves, stood near him in splendid apparel, their belts glittering with gold and gems. Near them were seven thousand eunuchs, four thousand of them white, the remainder black. The porters or doorkeepers were in number seven hundred. Barges and boats, with the most superb decorations, were seen swimming on the Tigris. Nor was the place itself less splendid, in which were hung up thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry, twelve thousand five hundred of which were of silk embroidered with gold. The carpets on the floor were twenty-two thousand. An hundred lions were brought out, with a keeper to each lion. Among the other spectacles of rare and stupendous luxury, was a tree of gold and silver spreading into eighteen large branches, on which, and on the lesser boughs, sat a variety of birds made of the same precious metals, as well as the leaves of the tree. While the machinery affected spontaneous motions, the several birds warbled

their natural harmony. Through this scene of magnificence, the Greek ambassador was led by the visir to the foot of the caliph's throne." ‡

Nor was the splendour of the Ommiades of Spain at all inferior to the Abbassides of Bagdad; in the same period that Caliphat produced a revenue of six millions of sterling money, a sum which in the tenth century exceeded the combined revenues of the christian monarchs. Cordova displayed six hundred moschs, nine hundred baths, and two hundred thousand houses, and the caliph gave laws to eighty cities of the first, and to three hundred of the second and third order, and twelve thousand villages and hamlets decorated the beautiful banks of the Guadalquivir. "Three miles from Cordova, in honour of his favorite Sultana, the third and greatest of the Abdalrahmans constructed the city, palace, and gardens of Zehrar Twenty-five years, and above three millions sterling were employed by the founder; his liberal taste invited the most skilful sculptors and architects of the age;

‡ Abulfeda, p. 237.

and the buildings were sustained or adorned by twelve hundred columns of Spanish and African, of Greek and Italian marble. The hall of audience was encrusted with gold and pearls, and a great bason in the centre, was surrounded with the curious and costly figures of birds and quadrupeds. In a lofty pavilion of the gardens, one of these basons and fountains, so delightful in a sultry climate, was replenished not with water, but with the purest quicksilver. The seraglio of Abdalrahman, his wives, concubines, and black eunuchs, amounted to six thousand three hundred persons; and he was attended to the field by a guard of twelve thousand horse, whose belts and scymetars were studded with gold."—— "Our imagination is dazzled by the splendid picture," continues the philosophic historian, "and whatever may be the cool dictates of reason, there are few among us who would obstinately refuse a trial of the comforts and the cares of royalty. It may therefore be of some use to borrow the experience of the same Abdalrahman, whose magnificence has perhaps excited our admiration and envy, and to transcribe an authentic memorial which was found in the closet of the deceased caliph." 'I have

now reigned above fifty years in victory or peace; beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honours, power and pleasure, have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation, I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot: they amount to FOURTEEN:—O man! place not thy confidence in this present world.'‡

In the most flourishing period of the Abasside dynasty, toward the latter end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century, reigned the Caliph Haroun Alrashid, or the Just, a name familiar even to our infancy through the medium of the Arabian Tales. Haroun was the most potent monarch of his race, a lover of learning, art and science, a warrior of the first fame, and indefatigable in the administration of the laws; he repeatedly travelled through his provinces from Chorasan to Ægypt; nine times he performed the pilgrimage of Mecca, and eight times he invaded the dominions of

‡ Gibbon, vol. x. p. 38, 39, 40.

Constantinople. His father Mahadi had compelled the Greeks to pay an annual tribute of seventy thousand dinars of gold, but upon his death, the Emperor Nicephorus resolving not to pay what his predecessors had so ingloriously submitted to, sent an epistle to Alrashid refusing this badge of disgrace, and terminating with the following menace: 'Restore therefore the fruits of your injustice, or abide the determination of the sword.' "At these words the ambassadors cast a bundle of swords before the foot of the throne. The caliph smiled at the menace, and drawing his scymetar, *samsamah*, cut asunder the feeble arms of the Greeks, without turning the edge, or endangering the temper of his blade. He then dictated an epistle of tremendous brevity: 'In the name of the most merciful God, Haroun Alrashid, commander of the faithful, to Nicephorus, the Roman Dog. I have read thy letter, O thou son of an unbelieving mother. Thou shalt not hear, thou shalt behold my reply.' It was written in characters of blood and fire on the plains of Phrygia,"* and Nicephorus was ultimately compelled to submit.

* Gibbon, vol. x. p. 54.

The epithet of *the just* applied to this caliph was not undeservedly bestowed; he was attentive and impartial as a legislator, and in his domestic character he was mild and generous. One exception however there is to this applause which has sullied the brightness of his fame, and covered his memory with reproach. He who could listen to the complaint of a poor widow who had been pillaged by his troops, and who dared, in a passage of the Koran, to threaten him with the judgment of God and posterity, instigated by ill-founded passion and intemperate revenge, slaughtered the innocent Barmecides, the most illustrious family of the east. As the relation of this transaction will throw some light on the manners of the period, its insertion here will not be inapposite. Yahi Ben Khaled, the first of this family who distinguished himself at Bagdad, and his four sons, Fadhel, Jaafer, Mohammed and Musa, were endowed with all the virtues and talents that elevate and adorn humanity, were possessed of large property and influence, and beloved both by prince and people. Yahia had been preceptor to Haroun, and, upon his accession to the throne, was appointed his visir, and when the infirmities of age com-

pelled him to retire, his son Jaafer succeeded to that high office. The most eloquent and pleasing character of his age, Jaafer became the inseparable companion of the caliph, nor could existence charm without the presence of the son of Yahia. The affairs of government, however, necessarily withheld him from the wishes of the caliph, who to enjoy therefore the entire society of a man so deservedly esteemed, deprived him of his office, and created Fadhel grand visir in his room. In these situations the two brothers for seventeen years swayed the empire and the affections of their master, until a moment of imprudence plunged them in the gulf of irretrievable ruin. The account of their disgrace is thus given:

"The caliph had a sister called Abassa, of whom he was passionately fond, and whose company he preferred to every thing but the conversation of Jaafer."

"These two pleasures he would fain have joined together, by carrying Jaafer with him in his visits to Abassa, but the laws of the Haram, which forbad any one, except a near relation, being introduced there, made that

impossible, and he was obliged to be absent either from his sister or his favorite. At length he discovered a method which he hoped would enable him to enjoy at the same time the society of these two persons, who were so dear to him. This was to unite Jaafer and Abassa in marriage. They were married accordingly; but with this express condition, that they should never meet, except in the presence of the caliph."

"Their interviews however were very frequent, and as neither could be insensible of the amiable qualities which the other possessed, a mutual affection took place between them. Blinded by their passion, they forgot the caliph's injunction, and the consequences of their intercourse were but too apparent. Abassa was delivered of a son, whom they privately sent to be educated at Mecca."

"For some time their amour was concealed from Alrashid; but the caliph having at length received intelligence of it, he gave way to his rage, and determined to take the most severe revenge. In consequence of this cruel resolve, he immediately commanded Jaafer to be put

to death, and the whole race of Barmec to be deprived of their possessions, and thrown into prison. These orders were obeyed; Jaafer was beheaded in the antichamber of the royal apartment, whither he had come to request an interview with the implacable Haroun, and his father and brothers perished in confinement."*

To the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, though in general merely considered as a work of extravagant fiction, their reader will be indebted for much genuine information relative to the domestic habits of the court and people of Bagdad, as they are now fully ascertained to convey a just picture of the manners and customs of the Caliphat during this splendid portion of its existence, and had the translation been more faithful to the idiom of the original, had better supported its peculiar spirit and strong features, and not mutilated a production of undoubted genius, these tales had still further merited the attention of the philosopher and historian. According to Colonel Capper they are still "universally read and admired throughout Asia by all ranks of men both old

* Carlyie's Specimens of Arabian Poetry, p. 54.

and young." "Before any person decides on the merit of these books," observes the colonel, "he should be eye witness of the effect they produce on those who best understand them. I have more than once seen the Arabians on the desert sitting round a fire, listening to these stories with such attention and pleasure, as totally to forget the fatigue and hardship with which an instant before they were entirely overcome."‡ Open as these romantic compositions are, however, to every class of readers, let us draw our illustrations from less familiar sources, yet not without expressing a wish that some elegant Orientalist would give them a more appropriate dress.

In the *Specimens of Arabian Poetry* with which Mr. Carlyle has lately favored the world, are three Songs by Mashdud, Rakeek and Rais, Improvisatori Poets in Bagdad; these are accompanied with a preface which as giving, in the opinion of the Professor, an excellent delineation of Arabian manners during the

‡ Observations on the passage to India through Egypt and across the great Desert.

flourishing period of the Caliphat, I shall quote here with its attendant poetry.

"I was one day going to the Mosque," says Abou Akramah, an author who supported himself at Bagdad by the profits of his pen, "in order to see if I could pick up any little anecdote which might serve for the ground-work of a tale. As I passed the gate of Abou Isy, son to the caliph Motawakkel, I saw Mashdud the celebrated extempore poet, standing near it."

"Mashdud saluted me, and asked whither I was going; I answered, to the mosque, and confessed without reserve the business which drew me thither. The poet, upon hearing this, pressed me to accompany him to the pala e of Abou Isy: I declined however complying with his solicitations, conscious of the impropriety of intruding myself uninvited into the presence of a person of such rank and consequence. But Abou Isy's porter, over-hearing our conversation, declared that he would put an end to my difficulties in a moment, by acquainting his master with my arrival."

"He did so; and in a short time two servants appeared, who took me up in their arms, and carried me into a most magnificent apartment, where their master was sitting. Upon my introduction, I could not help feeling a little confused, but the prince soon made me easy, by calling out in a good natured manner; 'Why do you stand blushing there, you simpleton? Take a seat.' I obeyed: and in a few minutes a sumptuous collation was brought in, of which I partook. Nor was the juice of the grape forgotten: a cupbearer, brilliant as the morning star, poured out wine for us more sparkling than the beams of the sun reflected by a mirror."

"After the entertainment I arose, and having invoked every blessing to be showered down upon the head of my bounteous host, I was preparing to withdraw. But Abou Isy prevented me, and immediately ordered Mashdud, together with Rakeek and Rais, two musicians, whose fame was almost equal to Mashdud's, to be called in. They appeared accordingly; and having taken their places, Mashdud gave us the following satyric song."

MASHDUD

ON THE MONKS OF KHABBET.

Tenants of yon hallow'd fane!
 Let me your devotions share,
There unceasing raptures reign—
 None are ever sober there.

Crowded gardens, festive bowers,
 Ne'er shall claim a thought of mine;
You can give in Khabbet's towers,—
 Purer joys and brighter wine.

Tho' your pallid faces prove
 How you nightly vigils keep,
'Tis but that you ever love
 Flowing goblets more than sleep.

Tho' your eye-balls dim and sunk
 Stream in penitential guise,
'Tis but that the wine you 've drunk
 Bubbles over from your eyes.

"He had no sooner finished, than Rakeek began, and in the same versification, and to the same air, sung as follows:"

RAKEEK

TO HIS FEMALE COMPANIONS.

Tho' the peevish tongues upbraid,
Tho' the brows of wisdom scowl,
Fair ones here on roses laid,
Careless will we quaff the bowl.

Let the cup, with nectar crown'd,
Thro' the grove its beams display,
It can shed a lustre round,
Brighter than the torch of day.

Let it pass from hand to hand,
Circling still with ceaseless flight,
Till the streaks of grey expand
O'er the fleeting robe of night.

As night flits, she does but cry,
"Seize the moments that remain"—
Thus our joys with yours shall vie,
Tenants of yon hallow'd fane!

"It was Rais's turn next, who charmed us with this plaintive little dialogue supposed to pass betwixt himself and a lady:"

DIALOGUE BY RAIS.

RAIS.

Maid of sorrow, tell us why
  Sad and drooping hangs thy head?
Is it grief that bids thee sigh?
  Is it sleep that flies thy bed?

LADY.

Ah! I mourn no fancied wound,
  Pangs too true this heart have wrung,
Since the snakes which curl around
  Selim's brows my bosom stung.

Destin'd now to keener woes,
  I must see the youth depart;
He must go, and as he goes
  Rend at once my bursting heart.

Slumber may desert my bed,
  'Tis not slumber's charms I seek—
'Tis the robe of beauty spread
  O'er my Selim's rosy cheek.*

The stern and simple manners of the first caliphs, of Abubeker, Omar and Othman were no longer in existence, nor was the enthusiasm

* Carlyle's Specimens of Arabian Poetry, p. 67.

of the people cherished by temporal and spiritual conquest. Softened by prosperity, literature, and the tranquil pleasures of domestic life, Haroun and his immediate successors sank upon the couch of luxury, and though the scene was for some time splendid and fascinating around them, the seeds of destruction lurked beneath "the robe of beauty," and in the tenth century Radhi, the twentieth of the Abbassides was the last who deserved the title of Commander of the faithful.

If we contemplate the philosophy and science of this powerful people, it will be found that their age of learning continued for near five hundred years, and was coeval with the darkest centuries of christian Europe. Their Augustan period, however, if we may make use of the expression, certainly took place beneath the auspices of the first caliphs of the house of Abbas; beneath the munificent encouragement of Almansor, Mahadi, Hadi, Haroun, Almamon, and their immediate successors, who, during the eighth and ninth centuries, cherished and cultivated the sciences, and invited from all parts of the world men of genius and knowledge, whose abilities, secure

of meeting honour and reward, cast a splendour on the court of Bagdad that has attracted the attention, the admiration and gratitude of every friend to intellectual improvement. These royal lovers of literature collected with incredible pains the manuscripts of grecian science, and employed the most skilful interpreters in translating them into Arabic, strenuously recommended to their subjects their perusal, and attended in person the assemblies of the literati. They founded at Bagdad libraries of the most ample extent, containing some hundred thousand volumes, and atoned, in some measure, to the literary world, for the ignorant fanaticism of the Caliph Omar, whose destruction of the Alexandrian collection plunged into oblivion many an author of the ancient world who had exalted his imagination with the hopes of immortality. The visirs and the emirs of the provinces emulated the liberality and patronage of the caliphs, and a taste for study, and for science was propagated throughout the vast extent of their empire. A college was established at Bagdad, through the munificence of a visir, who appropriated a sum of two hundred thousand pieces of gold to its foundation, and endowed it with an annual

revenue of fifteen thousand dinars. Here six thousand disciples of every rank were instructed at different times, in all the departments of literature; the indigent scholars were provided with adequate stipends, and liberal salaries were granted to the professors. Not only caliphs and emirs were encouragers of science, even in inferior life the same avidity for copying and collecting manuscripts prevailed, and a private doctor refused the invitation of the sultan of Bochara, because the carriage of his books would have required four hundred camels.

Among the various branches of human learning cultivated by the Arabians, philosophy, astronomy and physic, occupied their chief attention. The works of Aristotle and Plato, of Euclid, Apollonius and Ptolemy, were familiar to their schools, and their versions are ascribed to Honain, a celebrated physician who flourished at Bagdad, and died there A. D. 876. He founded a kind of Academy for translation, and the productions of his sons and disciples were published under his name. The logic and metaphysics of Aristotle, mathematics and the science of Algebra, the latter of which is

ascribed by the Arabs themselves to the Grecian Diophantus, were studied with profound attention, and the two former commented upon with great prolixity and acuteness. With still greater success did they cultivate "the sublime science of astronomy, which elevates the mind of man to disdain his diminutive planet and momentary existence. The costly instruments of observation were supplied by the caliph Almamon, and the land of the Chaldeans still afforded the same spacious level, the same unclouded horizon. In the plains of Sinaar, and a second time in those of Cufa, his mathematicians accurately measured a degree of the great circle of the earth, and determined at twenty-four thousand miles the entire circumference of our globe. From the reign of the Abbassides to that of the grand-children of Tamerlane, the stars, without the aid of glasses, were diligently observed; and the astronomical tables of Bagdad, Spain, and Samarcand, correct some minute errors, without daring to renounce the hypothesis of Ptolemy."‡

The science of medicine which had almost

‡ Gibbon, vol, x. p. 47.

expired in the west, was revived and restored to all its wonted lustre by the meritorious industry of the Arabians, and in the city of Bagdad eight hundred and sixty physicians were licensed to exercise their profession.† Exposed to perpetual danger in the field, the disciples of Mohammed were early taught to estimate the salutary powers of medicine and surgery, and the prophet himself was not only practically skilled in this art, but composed a book of Aphorisms for the instruction of his attendants and soldiers. The writings of Hippocrates and Galen were elaborately commented upon, and the names of Mesua, and Geber, of Razis and Avicenna, no unworthy disciples of the celebrated grecian, have descended to posterity with the honours due to their genius and industry. Many articles have been given by their research to the Materia Medica; botany is indebted to them for numerous and valuable additions to the herbal of Dioscorides, and Al Beithar of Malaga, their most celebrated botanist, travelled over half the globe to enrich his favorite science. In Anatomy indeed they claim little merit, tread-

† Bibliot. Arabico-Hispana, tom. i. p. 438.

ing servilely in the steps of Galen; their superstitious reverence for the dead arrested the progress of discovery, and confined them to the dissection of quadrupeds, a circumstance which led into numerous and sometimes fatal errors: but chemistry, as a science, may be said to have been created beneath the hands of the Arabians, and to have operated a revolution in the practice and theory of medicine: it met at first with vigorous opposition from the galenic school, but the powerful and salutary medicines it introduced, and extracted, as it were, from the bosom of the most virulent poisons in nature, soon crushed the timid and ineffective practice of its opponents. Chemical *theory* indeed, notwithstanding the wide range of Arabian and European science and learning, has not, until lately, offered any very solid assistance towards the improvement of medicine; within these thirty years however, such has been the rapid progress of the science, such the beautiful and singular discoveries it has produced, such a potent auxiliary has it proved to the physiologist, that combined with the doctrine of irritability, as laid down by Haller, Fontana, Brown and Darwin, it seems capable of establishing a system which, as

drawn from broad and applicable facts, may bid defiance to the assault of time. Returning, however, to our Arabians, it will be found that in the pursuit of alchemy and the elixir of immortality, the most beneficial discoveries were effected; the three kingdoms of nature were analysed; the distinction and affinity of alkalies ascertained; an excellent apparatus for the purposes of chemistry invented; and the miseries of mankind gave way to medicines elaborated in the crucibles of the alchymists.

The Ommiades of Spain were not less attentive, at this period, to the prosperity and cultivation of learning; we are told, though perhaps with some exaggeration, that the caliphs of the west had formed a library of six hundred thousand volumes, forty-four of which were employed in the mere catalogue. We have good authority however for asserting that Cordova, the metropolis of the commander of the faithful with its adjacent towns of Malaga, Almeria and Murcia, gave birth to better than three hundred writers, and that above seventy public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom. Agriculture, manufactures and commerce were likewise greatly

encouraged, and a few years after the Mohammedan conquest, a map of the country, with its seas, rivers, and harbours, was published by command of the caliph, with an account of its inhabitants and cities, climate, soil, and mineral productions.† Under the Abdalrahmans they rivalled the east in philosophy, astronomy and physic, and so great was the reputation of the Mohammedan physicians that the lives of the Catholic princes were entrusted to their care.‡

The Arts, especially poetry, music and architecture, were in high esteem among the nations of the east, and long before the era of their prophet, the Arabs of the desert, and of the happier district of Yemen, vied in the productions of their native bards. Their chief poems were affixed to the portal of the temple of Mecca, and challenged the admiration, or called forth the emulative abilities of the votaries of song. The seven poems of the Caaba inscribed in letters of gold were thus presented

† Cardonne, Hist. de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne, tom. i. p. 116, 117.

‡ Mariana, l. viii. c. 7. tom. i. p. 318.

to the people at the gate of the temple, and powerfully appealing to their passions and national virtues, inspired the love of valour, of generosity and of fame. No virtue indeed among the Arabs was held in so much estimation as that of generosity, which was carried to a length almost unprecedented in the annals of any other nation, and truly merits the appellation of heroic. "A dispute had arisen, who among the citizens of Mecca, was entitled to the prize of generosity; and a successive application was made to the three who were deemed most worthy of the trial. Abdallah, the son of Abbas, had undertaken a distant journey, and his foot was in the stirrup when he heard the voice of a suppliant, 'O son of the uncle of the apostle of God, I am a traveller and in distress.' He instantly dismounted to present the pilgrim with his camel, her rich caparison, and a purse of four thousand pieces of gold, excepting only the sword, either for its intrinsic value, or as the gift of an honoured kinsman. The servant of Kais informed the second suppliant that his master was asleep; but he immediately added, 'Here is a purse of seven thousand pieces of gold, it is all we have in the house, and here is an order that will entitle

you to a camel and a slave;' the master, as soon as he awoke, praised and enfranchised his faithful steward with a gentle reproof, that by respecting his slumbers he had stinted his bounty. The third of these heroes, the blind Arabah, at the hour of prayer, was supporting his steps on the shoulders of two slaves. 'Alas!' he replied, 'my coffers are empty but these you may sell; if you refuse, I renounce them.' At these words, pushing away the youths, he groped along the wall with his staff."* Of Hatem, the most beneficent character of Arabia, so many instances of generosity are recorded, that to enumerate them would fill a volume. He was also an eloquent poet, though prior to the promulgation of Mohammedanism, and his poems expressed the beneficence that reigned in his heart.

When such was the love for, and prevalence of poetry, during what we may term, the illiterate age of Arabia, we shall not be surprised to find that under the splendid period of the Caliphats of Bagdad and Cordova, the

* Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 242.

most lavish honours and rewards were bestowed on the favorites of the muse. For a single poem, Abou Teman, one of their most celebrated poets, received fifty thousand pieces of gold, and was at the same time told, that this pecuniary reward was deemed very inadequate to the obligation he had conferred.† During this happy portion of Mohammedan literature, the simplicity of the bards of Yemen was combined with an elegance peculiar to the poets of Bagdad, and a series of beautiful poems for many centuries of the Hejra has been collected, translated and given to the public by the taste and erudition of Professor Carlyle. Owing to a very strong attachment to and high opinion of their native language and poetic diction, the Arabians disdained to study or translate the elegant literature of Greece or Rome, and among their various philosophic and scientific works familiarized to the idiom of the east, not one poet or orator can be found. This has been lamented by some, whilst by others it has been considered rather as a fortunate circumstance, the sources of servile imitation being thus cut off, and nature alone left to

† Carlyle, p. 63.

inspire the genius of the poet; for it is a just remark that, "true taste in composition is by no means restricted to certain ages or climates, but will be found in every country, which is arrived at that point in civilization where barbarism has ceased and fantastic refinement not yet begun." ‡ The poems translated by Professor Carlyle are of themselves a strong proof of the truth of his observation. Far from being loaded with bombastic expression and inflated metaphor, they in general breathe the purest and chastest simplicity both in style and sentiment, and frequently touch the heart with the tender tones of genuine pathos.

Until the complete degradation of the caliphs of Bagdad and the extinction of the authority of the Ommiades of Spain, the poetry of the Arabians preserved its claim to superior excellence, and under Almostakfi, the last caliph of Cordova, his daughter Waladata was as celebrated for the sweetness of her poetry as for the beauty of her person. An Epigram of hers has been preserved by Casiri, and is thus elegantly translated by Mr. Carlyle.

‡ Carlyle's Specimens, preface, p. iii.

VERSES.

ADDRESSED BY WALADATA TO SOME YOUNG MEN WHO HAD PRETENDED A PASSION FOR HERSELF AND HER COMPANIONS.

When you told us our glances soft, timid, and mild,
Could occasion such wounds in the heart,
Can ye wonder that yours, so ungovern'd and wild,
Some wounds to our cheeks should impart?

The wounds on our cheeks, are but transient I own,
With a blush they appear and decay;
But those on the heart, fickle youths, ye have shown
To be even more transient than they.*

Nor was music less admired, or less ardently cultivated than poetry. The caliph Haroun Alrashid was passionately fond of it, and Isaac Almousely, the most distinguished musician at the court of Bagdad, was a necessary member of every party of amusement. He is recorded as possessing the power of soothing or stimulating the passions of the caliph at his pleasure; and once, it is said, that Alrashid having quarrelled with his favorite mistress, Meridah, left her with a determination to see her no

* Carlyle, p. 134.

more. Ignorant of the means of bringing about a reconciliation, and almost in despair, she applied to her friend the visir Jaafer, who, sending for Almousely, gave him a song adapted to the purpose, with a request that he would immediately perform it before the caliph, and with all the pathetic powers he was capable of exerting. The musician complied, and Haroun soothed by the melting tones of Almousely, bade adieu to his resentment, and rushing into the presence of his again beloved Meridah, confessed the impetuosity of his temper, and solicited an oblivion of the past. With not less success did the celebrated Abou Mohammed fascinate the ears of the caliph Wathek, who after listening to a specimen of his musical talents, threw his own robe over the shoulders of the musician, and ordered him a present of an hundred thousand dirhems.

The Architecture of the Arabians possessed neither the simplicity nor the unity of the grecian orders, but it displayed an imposing grandeur, and an air of vast magnificence. Gigantic in its outline, whilst its minuter parts were delicately finished, clothed with all that gorgeous wealth could lavish, and decorated

with the meretricious wonders of art, it excited admiration though it failed to gratify a chastised taste. When Ferdinand and Isabella entered in triumph the city of Granada, the inmost recesses and glories of the Alhambra were thrown open to their view, and as it was esteemed one of the noblest specimens of Saracenic architecture, a short account of its structure will convey to the reader a lively idea of their best and most splendid style, especially in interior decoration, for the exterior of the Alhambra presents but a rough and irregular appearance.

"Through a simple and narrow gate the spectator is conducted to a series of beauties which almost realize the fabulous Tales of the Genii. The bath, the first object which strikes his sight, consists of an oblong square, with a deep bason of clear water in the middle; two flights of marble steps leading down to the bottom; on each side a parterre of flowers, and a row of orange trees. The court is encircled with a peristile paved with marble; the arches bear upon very slight pillars, in proportions and style different from all the regular orders of architecture. The cielings and walls are

incrusted with fret-work in stucco, so minute and intricate, that the most patient draftsman would find it difficult to follow it, unless he made himself master of the general plan. The former are gilt or painted; and time has not faded the colours, though they are constantly exposed to the air; the lower part of the latter is Mosaic, disposed in fantastic knots and festoons; a work new, exquisitely finished, and exciting the most agreeable sensations."

"From the bath a second door opens into the court of the lions, an hundred feet in length, and fifty in breadth, environed with a colonnade seven feet broad on the sides, and ten at the end; the roof and gallery are supported by slender columns of virgin marble, fantastically adorned; and in the centre of the court are the statues of twelve lions, which bear upon their backs a large bason, out of which rises a lesser. A volume of water thrown up, falls again into the bason, passes through the beasts, and issues out of their mouths into a large reservoir, whence it is communicated to the other apartments."

"These apartments are decorated with what-

ever the art of the age could invent, or commerce could supply. The floors glitter with marble; the walls and the windows are encircled with Mosaic; and through the latter the rays of the sun gleam with a variety of light and tints on the former; the air is perpetually refreshed by fountains; and the double roof equally excludes the extremes of heat and cold; from every opening shady gardens of aromatic trees, beautiful hills, and fertile plains meet the eye; nor is it to be wondered that the Moors still regret the delightful gardens of Granada, and still offer up their prayers for the recovery of that city, which they deem a terrestrial paradise."*

Thus, whilst a darkness almost palpable hovered over christian Europe, whilst scarce one friendly ray glimmered on the footsteps of its barbarous inhabitants, the sun of science and of literature poured a steady light through the regions of the east, and through that part of the western world beneath the dominion of the worshippers of the Koran. In the courts of Bagdad and Cordova the manuscripts of the

* History of Spain, vol. i. p. 440.

ancients were accumulated; brought from every distant part of their own and the greek empire; translated and commented upon, by their most learned men; and some works now lost in the original have been recovered in the versions of the east. To these oriental Unitarians we are indebted for the introduction and improvement of algebra, for the creation almost of chemistry, for many new and effective drugs, for much accurate astronomical observation, and for several works of invention that have more or less tinged the fictions and poetry of the west.

The Arabians had thus the merit of preserving learning from a total wreck, and of cherishing and improving the arts and sciences, until Europe, roused from her inglorious slumber, appropriated the intellectual treasure, and shortly after carried her literary exertions to a degree of perfection unknown to, and unapprehended by the most learned of the Mohammedan world.

NUMBER XVI.

I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle; and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill.

MILTON.

O may the muse that loves to grieve,
Her strains into my breast instill,
Melodious as the bird of eve,
In Maro's lays that murmur still!

LANGHORNE.

IN no species of poetry has imitation been carried on with greater servility than, in what is termed the Eclogue; yet it might readily be supposed that he who was alive to the beauties of rural imagery; who possessed a just taste in selecting the more striking and pictoresque

features of the objects around him, would find in the inexhaustable stores of nature ample materials for decoration, while incidents of sufficient simplicity and interest, neither too coarse on the one hand, nor too refined on the other, adapted to the country and tinged with national manners and customs, might with no great difficulty be drawn from fact, or arranged by the fancy of the poet. Such combinations, however, under the epithet of pastoral, have not frequently occurred, owing, I conceive, to the mistaken idea that one peculiar form, style and manner, a tissue of hacknied scenery and sentiment, cannot with propriety be deviated from. Under such a preposterous conception genius must expire, a languid monotony pervade every effort, and the incongruity of the imagery and incident excite nothing but contempt. Theocritus, the father of pastoral poetry, has done little more than paint the rich and romantic landscape of Sicily, the language and occupations of its rustic inhabitants; a beautiful and original picture and drawn from the very bosom of simplicity and truth; and had succeeding poets copied him in this respect, and, instead of absurdly introducing the costume and scenery of Sicily, given a faithful

representation of their own climate and rural character, our pastorals would not be the insipid things we are now, in general, obliged to consider them, but accurate imitations of nature herself, sketched with a free and liberal pencil, and glowing with appropriate charms.

Unfortunately, however, for those few authors who possess *some* originality in pastoral composition, the professed critics in this department, with the exception of one or two, have exclusively and perversely dwelt and commented upon mere copyists, to the utter neglect of poets who might justly aspire to contest the palm of excellence with the grecian. In most of our dissertations on pastoral poetry, after due encomium on the merits of the Sicilian bard, few authors save Virgil, Spenser, Pope, Gay and Phillips are noticed, all, except the second, translators, imitators or parodists rather than original writers in this branch of poetry. If rural life no longer present us with shepherds singing and piping for a bowl or a crook, why persist, in violation of all probability, to introduce such characters? If pastoral cannot exist without them, let us cease to compose it, for to Theocritus these personages were objects of

hourly observation, and the peasants of Sicily a kind of *Improvisatori*. I am persuaded, however, that simplicity in diction and sentiment, a happy choice of rural imagery, such incidents and circumstances as may even *now* occur in the country, with interlocutors equally removed from vulgarity or considerable refinement, are all that are essential to success.* Upon this plan the celebrated GESNER has written his Idyllia, compositions which have secured him immortality and placed him on a level with the Grecian. By many indeed, and upon no trifling grounds, he is preferred, having with much felicity assumed a medium between the rusticity of Theocritus, and the too refined and luxuriant imagination of Bion and Moschus, preserving at the same time the natural painting of the Sicilian, with the pathetic touches and exquisite sensibility of the contemporary bards.

* Since the first edition of these essays Mr. Southey has published six English Eclogues; these are avowedly written upon a plan similar to that which I have taken much pains to recommend in this sketch. In some of these pieces I think he has succeeded well. I would particularly distinguish for their simplicity and beauty the "Old Mansion House," "The Witch," and "The Ruined Cottage." The "Grandmother's Tale" appears to me to have too much of the horrid in it for this species of poetry.

One of the most harmonious and beautifully plaintive passages perhaps in the whole compass of grecian poetry may be drawn from the *Epitaph on Bion by Moschus*; the comparison between vegetative and human life, which, though in some measure foreign to the purport of this paper, I cannot avoid indulging myself and my readers in quoting, with the addition of a couple of versions and one or two of the most happy imitations;—they cannot fail of being acceptable to feeling and to taste.

Αι, αι, ται, μαλαχαι μεν επαν κατα καπον
  ολωνται,
Η τα χλωρα σελινα, το τ' ευθαλες ουλον ανηθον,
Υστερον αυ ζωοντι, και εις ετος αλλο φυοντι
Αμμες δ'οι μεγαλοι και καρτεροι η σοφοι ανδρες,
Οπποτε πρωτα θανωμες ανακοοι εν χθονι κοιλα
Ευδομες ευ μαλα μακρον ατερμονα νηγρετον ὑπνον.

Though fade crisp anise, and the parsley's green,
And vivid mallows from the garden scene,
The balmy breath of spring their life renews,
And bids them flourish in their former hues!
But we, the great, the valiant, and the wise,
When once the seal of death has clos'd our eyes,

Lost in the hollow tomb obscure and deep,
Slumber, to wake no more, one long unbroken sleep!

POLWHELE.

The meanest herb we trample in the field,
Or in the garden nurture, when its leaf
At winter's touch is blasted, and its place
Forgotten, soon its vernal buds renews,
And from short slumber wakes to life again,
Man wakes no more! Man, valiant, glorious, wise,
When death once chills him sinks in sleep profound,
A long, unconscious, never ending sleep.

GISBORNE.

The same sentiment may be found in Catullus, Horace, Albinovanus, Spenser, &c. but none have equalled Doctors Jortin and Beattie, in imitating, and even improving on this pensive idea.

Hei mihi! lege rata sol occidit atque resurgit,
Lunaque mutatæ reparat dispendia formæ:
Sidera, purpurei telis extincta diei,
Rursùs nocte vigent. humiles telluris alumni,
Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,
Quos crudelis hyems lethali tabe peredit;
Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, rediitque sereni
Temperies anni, redivivo è cespite surgunt.
Nos, Domini rerum! nos, magna et pulchra minati!

Cum breve ver vitæ robustaque transiit æstas,
Deficimus: neque nos ordo revolubilis auras
Reddit in ætherias, tumuli nec claustra resolvit.

JORTIN.

Ah why thus abandon'd to darkness and woe,
Why thus, lonely Philomel, flows thy sad strain?
For spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
And thy bosom no trace of misfortune retain.
Yet, if pity inspire thee, ah cease not thy lay,
Mourn, sweetest Complainer, Man calls thee to mourn:
O sooth him, whose pleasures like thine pass away—
Full quickly they pass—but they never return.

Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent displays;
But lately I mark'd, when majestic on high
She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze,
Roll on thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
The path that conducts thee to splendor again.—
But Man's faded glory no change shall renew.
Ah fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you;
For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
Perfum'd with fresh fragrance and glittering with dew.
Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;
Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.—

But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn!
O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!

BEATTIE.

The beginning of the quotation from Jortin, and the two first stanzas from Dr. Beattie, are beautiful additions to the original idea. The lines of Beattie indeed flow with the most melancholy and musical expression, steal into the heart itself, and excite a train of pleasing though gloomy association.*

Closing, however, this long digression, let us return to our subject, and here we may observe, that some time before the age of Spenser, a model of pastoral simplicity was given us in a beautiful poem entitled *Harpalus*, and which is introduced by Dr. Percy into his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Had Spenser attended more to the unaffected ease and natural expression of this fine old pastoral, he would not, I presume, have interwoven theology with his eclogues, nor chosen such a

* This observation is only applicable to the lines here quoted, for the concluding stanzas of this exquisite poem completely remove the cloud which hung over the prospects of the grecian poet, and present to the reader the christian doctrine of a resurrection.

barbarous and vulgar jargon to convey the sentiments of his shepherds in. Few poets exceed Spenser in the brilliancy of his imagination, and there is a tender melancholy in his compositions which endears him to the reader, but elegant simplicity, so necessary in Bucolic poetry, was no characteristic of the author of the *Fairy Queen*. In every requisite for this province of his divine art, he has been much excelled by DRAYTON, whose *Nymphidia* may be considered as one of the best specimens we have of the pastoral eclogue. The present age seems to have forgotten this once popular poet; an edition indeed has been published of his *Heroical Epistles*, but various other portions of his works, and more especially his Nymphidia, merit republication.

After the example of Tasso and Guarini, whose Aminta and Pastor Fido were highly distinguished in the literary world, FLETCHER wrote his *Faithful Shepherdess*, a piece that rivals, and, perhaps, excels the boasted productions of the Italian muse. Equally possessing the elegant simplicity which characterises the Aminta, it has at the same time a richer vein of wild and romantic imagery, and disdains

those affected prettinesses which deform the drama of Guarini. This Arcadian Comedy of Fletcher's was held in high estimation by Milton; its frequent allusion, and with the finest effect, to the popular superstitions, caught the congenial spirit of our enthusiastic bard. The *Sad Shepherd* of Jonson likewise, Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* and WARNER'S *Albion's England* may be mentioned as containing much pastoral description of the most genuine kind. Of the singular production of Warner, there is, I believe, no modern edition, yet few among our elder poets more deserve the attention of the lover of nature and rural simplicity. Some well chosen extracts from this work are to be found in the collections of Percy and Headley, and his *Argentile and Curan* has been the mean of enriching our language with an admirable drama from the pen of Mason. Scott too, in describing his favorite village of Amwell, "where sleeps our bard by Fame forgotten" has offered a due tribute to his memory. Numerous passages estimable for their simple and pathetic beauty might be quoted from his volume; the following will convince the reader, that harmony of versification also, and a terseness and felicity of diction are among his excellences.

She casting down her bashful eyes
  Stood senseless then a space,
Yet what her tongueless love adjourn'd
  Was extant in her face.

With that she dasht her on the lips,
  So dyed double red:
Hard was the heart that gave the blow
  Soft were those lips that bled,

When in the holy-land I pray'd
  Even at the holy grave,
Forgive me God! a sigh for sin,
  And three for love I gave.

Each spear that shall but cross thy helme,
  Hath force to crase my heart:
But if thou bleed, of that thy blood
  My fainting soul hath part,
With thee I live, with thee I die,
  With thee I lose or gain.

Methinks I see how churlish looks
  Estrange thy cheerful face,
Methinks thy gestures, talk and gait,
  Have chang'd their wonted grace:

Methinks thy sometimes nimble limbs
With armour now are lame:
Methinks I see how scars deform
Where swords before did maim:
I see thee faint with summer's heat,
And droop with winter's cold.

Albion's England.

That pleasing little poem, *The Fishermen* of Theocritus, probably first suggested to Sannazarius the idea of writing *piscatory* eclogues, who has been followed with much success by Phineas Fletcher and Brown. Whatever may be thought of the employment, as suited to the eclogue, of those who live on the sea-shore and subsist by catching the produce of the deep, it will readily be allowed that our rivers at least, fertilise the most rich and romantic parts of our island, and that they display to the fisher lingering upon their banks the most lovely scenery, such as mingling with the circumstances of his amusement, and the detail of appropriate incident, would furnish very delightful pictures, and in the genuine style of Bucolic poetry. Fletcher and Brown have in this manner rendered their eclogues truly interesting, and even Isaac Walton, though no poet, has in his *Complete Angler* introduced

some inimitably drawn pastoral scenes; what can be more exquisite than the following description.

"Turn out of the way a little, good scholar, towards yonder high honey-suckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing, whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows. Look, under the broad beech tree, I sat down, when I was last this way a fishing, and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree, near to the brow of that primrose hill; there I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their center, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble stones, which broke their waves and turned them into foam: and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the chearful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possest my soul with content, that

I thought, as the poet has happily exprest it,

I was for that time lifted above earth;

As I left this place and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas a handsome milk-maid, that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be as too many men too often do; but she cast away all care and sang like a nightingale."*

In the pastoral song and ballad the moderns, and particularly the scotch and english, have greatly excelled; Rowe's despairing shepherd is the sweetest poem of the kind we have in England, and Shenstone's ballad in four parts, though not equal in merit to the former, has yet long and deservedly been a favorite with the public. In artless expression of passion, however, in truth of colouring, and navitè of diction, nothing can rival the Scotch pastoral songs; they originated in a country abounding in a rich assemblage of rural images; "smooth

* Walton's Complete Angler, 1st. Editi n by Sir John Hawkins, p. 73.

and lofty hills," says Dr. Beattie, speaking of the southern provinces of Scotland, "covered with verdure; clear streams winding through long and beautiful vallies; trees produced without culture, here straggling or single, and there crowding into little groves and bowers;—with other circumstances peculiar to the districs I allude to, render them fit for pasturage, and favorable to romantic leisure and tender passions. Several of the old Scotch songs take their names from the rivulets, villages, and hills, adjoining to the Tweed near Melrose; a region distinguished by many charming varieties of rural scenery, and which, whether we consider the face of the country, or the genius of the people, may properly enough be termed the Arcadia of Scotland. And all these songs are sweetly and powerfully expressive of love and tenderness, and other emotions suited to the tranquility of pastoral life."* Robene and Makyn, Ettric Banks, Eubuchts Marion, and several other scotch pieces, are striking proofs of the Doctor's assertion.

To rouse the imagination by the charms of

* Beattie on Poetry and Music, p. 173.

novelty, several of our poets have transferred the eclogue to the vallies of Persia and the deserts of Arabia, to breathe the odors of Yemen, or revel mid the groves of Circassia. The life of the wandering Arab abounds with events which strike the fancy, and when clothed in the metaphorical and exuberant language of the east cannot fail to interest our curiosity and excite our feelings. Their independence, hospitality and love of poetry are beautiful features of their character, and form a strong contrast with the more luxurious and servile existence of the Persian. In Arabia itself nothing can be more opposed than the two districts which are known by the epithets of petrea and felix; a dreary and boundless waste of sand, without shade, shelter or water, scorched by the burning rays of the sun, and intersected by sharp and naked mountains, while, instead of refreshing breezes, breathe the most deadly vapours and whirlwinds and which rasing the sandy ocean threaten to overwhelm the affrighted caravan, are descriptive of the one part, while shady groves, green pastures, streams of pure water, fruits of the most delicious flavour, and air of the most balmy fragrance characterise the other. From

the banks of the Tigris, from the deserts of Arabia, from the shaded plains of Georgia and Circassia has our inimitable COLLINS drawn his scenery and characters, and no eclogues of ancient or modern times, in pathetic beauty, in richness and wildness of description, in simplicity of sentiment and manners can justly be esteemed superior. His *Hassan, or the Camel-Driver*, is, I verily believe, one of the most tenderly sublime, most sweetly-descriptive poems in the cabinet of the Muses. The *Solyman* of Sir William Jones, and the *Oriental Eclogues* of Scott of Amwell, have also considerable merit; the former is an exquisite specimen of the Arabian eclogue, and the *Serim* and *Li-Po* of the latter have many pictoresque touches, and much pleasing moral.

A poet of fine imagination, and great pathetic powers, has lately presented us with *Botany-Bay Eclogues*, a subject fruitful in novelty both of scenery and character; nor has he failed strongly to interest our feelings. In *Elinor*, the first of his four eclogues, he has more particularly availed himself of the peculiar features of the country; the following passage vividly paints the state of this yet savage land.

Welcome ye marshy heaths! ye pathless woods,
Where the rude native rests his wearied frame
Beneath the sheltering shade; where, when the storm,
As rough and bleak it rolls along the sky,
Benumbs his naked limbs, he flies to seek
The dripping shelter. Welcome ye wild plains
Unbroken by the plough, undelv'd by hand
Of patient rustic; where for loving herds,
And for the music of the bleating flocks,
Alone is heard the kangaroo's sad note
Deepening in distance.

SOUTHEY.

Mrs. West too, in imitation of the pastoral ballad of Rowe and Shenstone, has given us some elegant productions; one, in which the superstition and imagery of the Scotish Highlands are introduced, has the merit of originality.

If what has been now observed, should induce the unprejudiced reader to reperuse the authors alluded to, he will probably be inclined to admit that, in pastoral poetry, Virgil, Spenser, Pope, Gay and Phillips must yield the palm to Tasso, Warner, Drayton

and the two Fletchers, to Rowe, Ramsay,* Shenstone, Gesner and Collins; yet most of our critics in this department have considered the former as the only genuine disciples of Theocritus, and have scarce deigned to mention any of the latter. Some indeed have noticed the Italians and the courtly Fontenelle, but none, except Blair, though treating professedly upon this subject, have applauded Gesner, and as to Warner and Drayton, save a few observations with regard to the latter from the elegant pen of Dr. Aikin, they have almost suffered oblivion. Virgil, excluding his first Bucolic, is a mere, though a very pleasing imitator, and whatever may be thought of Spenser, Pope has certainly nothing but his musical versification to recommend him. The purport of Gay seems to have been parody and burlesque, and Phillips, and I may here also add Lytleton, though superior perhaps to Pope, have little or no originality. It is no wonder, therefore, that modern pastoral poetry should appear so despicable contrasted with

* Though I have not previously mentioned the name of Ramsay, I consider his *Gentle Shepherd* as included under the remarks made on Scotish Pastoral Poetry.

the ancient, when our best and most original writers are unappealed to; when to quote Pope Gay and Phillips, Warner, Drayton, Collins and Gesner are neglected. These four authors assuredly rescue modern pastoral and eclogue from the charge of insipidity. Not servilely treading in the footsteps of Theocritus and Virgil, they have chalked out and embellished with the most beautiful simplicity, paths of their own; their flowers are congenial to the soil, and display their tints with a brilliancy and fragrance which no sickly exotic can ever hope to emulate.* To this remark the oriental eclogue may be opposed, but let it be observed that the manners still exist, and have all the freshness of living nature; the shepherds of Arabia are what they were a thousand years

* Dr. Aikin, in his Essay on ballads and pastoral songs, has mentioned the pastorals of a Mr. Smith: these, as I have had no opportunity of perusing them, I must of course be silent with regard to; but in justice to perhaps a very ingenious poet, I think it necessary to transcribe the Doctor's opinion. "That there is still room for novelty in this walk," observes he, "has lately been agreeably shown in the pastorals of Mr. Smith, the landscape painter, which, however unequal and deficient in harmony and correctness, have infinitely more merit than Pope's melodious echoes of an echo. Mr. Smith's pieces will also illustrate my former remark, that the manners and sentiments of our rural vulgar cannot be rendered pleasing subjects for poetry; for where he paints them most naturally, they are least agreeable."

ago, and a well-drawn picture of their pastoral customs and country must be highly relished by the lovers of simple and independent life. In Warner and Drayton our own country manners, without exaggeration or much embellishment are naturally and correctly given, and in Gesner, the domestic affections, flowing from the bosom of more refined sensibility, and very pictoresque description, are clothed in language of the utmost simplicity.

In pursuit of the idea started in the commencement of this sketch, that simplicity in diction and sentiment, a proper choice of rural imagery, such incidents and circumstances as may even now occur in the country, together with interlocutors equally removed from vulgarity, or considerable refinement, are, in the present state of society in Europe, all that can be requisite for the composition of the pastoral, I have ventured to append to these strictures a small poem, which though it may fall short of the precepts inculcated in the preceding essay, will yet, I trust, be tolerated by the reader, more especially when he shall recollect, that to lay down just critical rules, and to carry

those rules into execution frequently require very different powers, and that the latter is incomparably the most difficult task.

EDWIN AND ORLANDO.

From scenes of wild variety, from where
Quick-glancing winds the stream the pine-hung vale
Along, from where the madd'ning waters leap
From rock to rock, from woods of druid oak,
From groves where Love and rural Bliss reside,
O Gesner deign to stray! for sure in scenes
Like these thy gentle spirit rests. Sweet Bard
Of pastoral song! on whom the Graces shed
Their balmy dew, to whom they did impart
Their magic lore, thee, tender swain! ah thee
The wild woods and each murm'ring stream, the hill,
The dale, young Fancy's fair elysium, long
Shall moan, and oft the pensive pilgrim haunt
The turf that wraps thy clay. O haste lov'd shade,
O hither wing thy airy flight, but grant
One modest wreathe from thy unfading laurel,
Then shall the strain for ever melt the heart,
For ever vibrate on the ravish'd ear.

Calm and still grey eve came on, and silence
Girt the valley, save when the bird of night,

Sung to the list'ning moon her sweet complaint,
For, mid the cloudless vault of heav'n, full
orb'd,
Pale Cynthia shone; in mellow lustre clad
The straw-roof'd cot, and tipt the quiv'ring leaf;
Soft on the grass th' expansive silver slept,
And on the trembling stream her radiance
Play'd, and many a fragrant sprite that dreams
On flowr's the day, now stole the moon-lov'd
green
Along, and danc'd upon the dewy ray.

At this sequester'd and this lonely hour,
When Melancholy loves to pause, and heave
The plaintive sigh, or joys the dreary shade
To haunt, or roam the wild, with folded arms
With pensive step and slow, two shepherds
stray'd
To where a thick-wrought grove embrown'd
the lawn,
Where sweetly tinted by it's solemn gloom
A time-worn Abbey stood, its grey-ting'd stone
Seen thro' the parting leaves, whilst murm'ring
roll'd
Its waters clear the rapid stream and pierc'd
The wood's green shade; here careless stretch'd
it's banks

Along were Edwin and Orlando laid,
The first a stranger to these sylvan scenes,
When sudden rush'd upon their wond'ring view
A female form, of beauty equisite,
In flowing robe array'd of snowy white,
That round her folded by a purple zone,
In sweet disorder caught the breeze; her hair
Of light brown hue hung mantling on her neck
And in her arms she bore a smiling babe,
O'er which she sigh'd most bitterly, and on
It's rosy cheek dropt tears of silent woe;
Then to the heavens, in that bright moisture
bath'd,
Her fair blue eyes she 'd lift, then clasp her child
In agony of soul, and smile and weep
By turns; then leaning o'er it wildly chaunt
Some sad, some plaintive strain, then oft repeat
"Where is my Love? oh, he is dead and gone!
"No one to shrowd him from the rav'ning
bird!"
And then she'd run and shriek aloud, convuls'd
With visionary fear: Orlando sigh'd—
'Peace to thy troubled soul, sweet maid!'
exclaim'd
His gentle friend, yet scarce had spoke, when lo!
Swift as the meteor courses thro' the gloom,
She disappear'd and sank amid the shade—

'Tell me, Orlando,' then Young Edwin cried,
'O tell me why this lily droops beneath
'So stern a fate? ah, would to heav'n my hand,
'My fost'ring hand, could prop its falling bloom!
'I would sustain it with a lover's care,
'And grace with all his favor.'

ORLANDO.

Oh my friend
There dwelt not on our plains a lovlier maid,
Or one of sweeter nature, modesty,
Calm innocence, and mild simplicity,
Spread their chaste colours o'er her tender form;
No care disturb'd the dimple on her cheek,
But jocund Health sprang lightly bounding on,
With Rapture moving to the note of joy,
The boast of yon sad weeping cots, the pride
And support of an aged sire, sole suit
And fav'rite of the gen'rous youth, with worth,
With honour, and affection blest, but ah!
Misfortune crush'd this spotless flower, and dash'd it
In the dust!—ken'st thou, Edwin yonder halls
Whose turrets rise above the circling wood?
Their Lord can vaunt of Fortune's lib'ral smile,

Noble by birth, but of a soul as mean
As yon vile worm that creeps in slime along:
By subtile fraud and flatt'ry's soothing charms
He caught poor Mary's unsuspecting heart,
And villian as he was, and under plea
Of holy rites betray'd the heart he won,
Left her the soul-tormenting pang to feel
Of disappointed love, left her to prove
Maternal care imbitter'd by remorse,
To curse those charms that lur'd the spoiler's eye
And broke a parent's heart:—since that sad hour
She roams the fields, her infant in her arms,
And oft will utter such wild strains of grief,
Her base betrayer her continual theme,
As those you 've lately heard—but hark my friend!
The gentle Mourner sings; it is her voice
Beneath the echoing arch; oft mid the aisle
Of yonder Abbey will she sit and pour
Her love-lorn sorrows o'er the mossy tomb.

EDWIN.

Blest be the soul that touch'd so sweetly wild
The tender note of woe! Ah, Mourner dear!
Long as thou breath'st this vital air, so long

The ray of hope shall tint thy passing day,
And when at length the wish'd for hour shall
come
That giv'st thy sorrows to the mould'ring grave,
Thou shalt not want the sympathetic tear,
Nor yet the turf thy sprite delights to haunt,
With all the fragrance of the blushing spring
Forget to bloom.

ORLANDO.

Mark yon grass-grown cloyster,
Her lone, yet fav'rite walk! here oft at noon,
At eve and dewy morn, with tearful eye
She comes, to meditate past scenes of dark
And pensive hue, and oft her fancy deems
The dear deceiver dead, with all the sad
And horrid circumstance of tragic woe.

EDWIN.

Poor Mary! fare thee well! oft shall Edwin
stray
From yonder neighb'ring vale, oft gently try
To dissipate thy chearless gloom, and check
Thy falling tear—till then, meek nature's child!
Till then, thou pilgrim mourner! fare thee well.

NUMBER XVII.

Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatu,
Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris;
Quam superhaud ullæ poterant impune volantes
Tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.

VIRGIL.

OBJECTS of terror may with propriety be divided into those which owe their origin to the agency of super-human beings, and form a part of every system of mythology, and into those which depend upon natural causes and events for their production. In the essay on gothic superstition the former species has been noticed, and a tale presented to the reader whose chief circumstances are brought about through the influence of preternatural power; on the latter we shall now deliver a few observations, and terminate them with a fragment

in which terror is attempted to be excited by the interference of simple material causation.

Terror thus produced requires no small degree of skill and arrangement to prevent its operating more pain than pleasure. Unaccompanied by those mysterious incidents which indicate the ministration of beings mightier far than we, and which induce that thrilling sensation of mingled astonishment, apprehension and delight so irresistably captivating to the generality of mankind, it will be apt to create rather horror and disgust than the grateful emotion intended. To obviate this result, it is necessary either to interpose pictoresque description, or sublime and pathetic sentiment, or so to stimulate curiosity by the artful texture of the fable, or by the uncertain and suspended fate of an interesting personage, that the mind shall receive such a degree of artificial pleasure as may mitigate and subdue what, if naked of decoration and skilful accompaniment, would shock and appal every feeling heart.

A poem, a novel, or a picture may however, notwithstanding its accurate imitation of nature,

and beauty of execution, unfold a scene so horrid, or so cruel, that the art of the painter or the poet is unable to render it communicative of the smallest pleasurable emotion. He who could fix, for instance, upon the following event as a fit subject for the canvas, was surely unacquainted with the chief purport of his art. "A robber who had broken into a repository of the dead, in order to plunder a corse of some rich ornaments, is said to have been so affected with the hideous spectacle of mortality which presented itself when he opened the coffin, that he slunk away, trembling and weeping, without being able to execute his purpose." "I have met," says Dr. Beattie, "with an excellent print upon this subject; but was never able to look at it for half a minute together."* In a collection of scotish ballads, published by Mr. Pinkerton, there is one termed *Edward*, which displays a scene which no poet, however great his talents, could render tolerable to any person of sensibility. A young man, his sword still reeking with blood, rushes into the presence of his mother at whose suggestion he had the moment before destroyed

* Beattie on Poetry and Music, p. 115.

his father. A short dialogue ensues which terminates by the son pouring upon this female fiend the curses of hell.‡ The *Mysterious Mother* also, a tragedy by the late celebrated Lord Orford labours under an insuperable defect of this kind. The plot turns upon a mother's premeditated incest with her own son, a catastrophe productive only of horror and aversion, and for which the many well-written scenes introductory to this monstrous event cannot atone.

No efforts of genius on the other hand are so truly great as those which approaching the brink of horror, have yet, by the art of the poet or painter, by adjunctive and pictoresque embellishment, by pathetic, or sublime emotion, been rendered powerful in creating the most delightful and fascinating sensations. Shakspeare, if we dismiss what is now generally allowed not to be his, the wretched play of Titus Andronicus, has seldom, if ever, exceeded the bounds of salutary and grateful terror. Many strong instances of emotion of this kind unmingled with the wild fictions of

‡ Select Scotish Ballads, vol. 1. p. 80.

superstition, yet productive of the highest interest, might, had we room for their insertion, be quoted from his drama, but perhaps the first specimen in the records of poetry is to be found in the works of an elder poet, in the *Inferno* of *Dante*.

A whole family perishing from hunger in a gloomy dungeon, would appear to partake too much of the *terrible* for either poetry or painting, yet has Dante, by the introduction of various pathetic touches rendered such a description the most striking, original and affecting scene perhaps in the world, and *Sir Joshua Reynolds* by his celebrated picture of Ugolino, has shewn that, through the medium of exalted genius, it is equally adapted to the canvas. *Michael Angèlo* too, an enthusiastic disciple of Dante, and possessing similar powers, has likewise executed a Bas-Relief on the subject.

As every lover of the sublime Italian must be grateful for the insertion, no apology can possibly be wanting for copying a portion of this admirable narrative as it has been literally translated by Dr. Warton. Ugolino is repre-

sented by the poet as detailing his own sufferings and those of his family. "The hour approached," says he, "when we expected to have something brought us to eat. But instead of seeing any food appear, *I heard the doors of that horrible dungeon more closely barred.* I beheld my little children *in silence*, and could not weep. My heart was petrified! The little wretches wept, and my dear Anselm said; *father you look on us! what ails you?* I could neither weep nor answer, and continued swallowed up in silent agony, all that day, and the following night, even till the dawn of day. As soon as a glimmering ray darted through the doleful prison, that I could view again *those four faces in which my own image was impressed*, *I gnawed both my hands*, with grief and rage. My children believing I did this through eagerness to eat, raising themselves suddenly up, said to me, *My father! our torments would be less, if you would allay the rage of your hunger upon us.* I restrained myself, that I might not encrease their misery. *We were all mute that day, and the following.* The fourth day being come, Gaddo, falling extended at my feet, cried, *My father, why do you not help me?* and died. The other

three expired one after the other, between the fifth and sixth day, famished as thou seest me now! And I, *being seized with blindness*, began to go *groping upon them with my hands and feet:* and continued calling them by their *names three days* after they were dead; then *hunger vanquished my grief!*" *

In the productions of Mrs. Radcliffe, the Shakspeare of Romance Writers, and who to the wild landscape of Salvator Rosa has added the softer graces of a Claude, may be found many scenes truly terrific in their conception, yet so softened down, and the mind so much relieved, by the intermixture of beautiful description, or pathetic incident, that the impression of the whole never becomes too strong, never degenerates into horror, but pleasurable emotion is ever the predominating result. In her last piece, termed *The Italian*, the attempt of Schedoni to assassinate the amiable and innocent Ellena whilst confined with Banditti in a lone house on the sea shore, is wrought up in so masterly a manner that every nerve

* Warton on the Genius and Writings of Pope. vol. i. p. 264.

vibrates with pity and terror, especially at the moment when about to plunge a dagger into her bosom he discovers her to be his daughter; every word, every action of the shocked and self-accusing Confessor, whose character is marked with traits almost superhuman, appal yet delight the reader, and it is difficult to ascertain whether ardent curiosity, intense commiseration, or apprehension that suspends almost the faculty of breathing, be, in the progress of this well-written story, most powerfully excited.

Smollet too, notwithstanding his peculiar propensity for burlesque and broad humour, has in his *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, painted a scene of natural terror with astonishing effect; with such vigour of imagination indeed, and minuteness of detail, that the blood runs cold, and the hair stands erect from the impression. The whole turns upon the Count, who is admitted during a tremendous storm, into a solitary cottage in a forest, discovering a body just murdered in the room where he is going to sleep, and the door of which, on endeavouring to escape, he finds fastened upon him.

The sublime Collins likewise, in his lyric pieces, exhibits much admirable imagery which forcibly calls forth the emotions of fear as arising from natural causes; the concluding lines of the following description of Danger make the reader absolutely shudder, and present a picture at once true to nature and full of originality.

Danger, whose limbs of giant mold
What mortal eye can fix'd behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form!
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep.‡

The exquisite scotch ballad of *Hardyknute*, so happily compleated by Mr. Pinkerton, may be also mentioned as including several incidents which for genuine pathos, and for that species of terror now under consideration, cannot easily be surpassed. The close of the first, and commencement of the second part are particularly striking.

‡ Ode to Fear.

In the fragment annexed to these observations, it has been the aim of the author to combine pictoresque description with some of those objects of terror which are independent of supernatural agency.

The sullen tolling of the Curfew was heard over the heath, and not a beam of light issued from the dreary villages, the murmuring Cotter had extinguished his enlivening embers, and had shrunk in gloomy sadness to repose, when Henry De Montmorency and his two attendants rushed from the castle of A——y.

The night was wild and stormy, and the wind howled in a fearful manner. The moon flashed, as the clouds passed from before her, on the silver armour of Montmorency, whose large and sable plume of feathers streamed threatening in the blast. They hurried rapidly on, and, arriving at the edge of a declivity, descended into a deep glen, the dreadful and savage appearance of which, was sufficient to strike terror into the stoutest heart. It was narrow, and the rocks on each side, rising to a prodigious height, hung bellying over their

heads; furiously along the bottom of the valley, turbulent and dashing against huge fragments of the rock, ran a dark and swoln torrent, and farther up the glen, down a precipice of near ninety feet, and roaring with tremendous strength, fell, at a single stroke, an aweful and immense cascade. From the clefts and chasms of the crag, abrupt and stern the venerable oak threw his broad breadth of shade, and bending his gigantic arms athwart the stream, shed, driven by the wind, a multitude of leaves, while from the summits of the rock was heard the clamor of the falling fragments that bounding from its rugged side leapt with resistless fury on the vale beneath.

Montmorency and his attendants, intrepid as they were, felt the inquietude of apprehension; they stood for some time in silent astonishment, but their ideas of danger from the conflict of the elements being at length alarming, they determined to proceed, when all instantly became dark, whilst the rushing of the storm, the roaring of the cascade, the shivering of the branches of the trees, and the dashing of the rock assailed at once their sense of hearing. The moon, however, again darting from a

cloud, they rode forward, and, following the course of the torrent, had advanced a considerable way, when the piercing shrieks of a person in distress arrested their speed; they stopped, and listening attentively, heard shrill, melancholy cries repeated, at intervals, up the glen, which gradually becoming more distant, grew faint, and died away. Montmorency, ever ready to relieve the oppressed, couched his lance, and bidding his followers prepare, was hasting on, but again their progress was impeded by the harrowing and stupendous clash of falling armour, which, reverberating from the various cavities around, seemed here and there, and from every direction, to be echoed with double violence, as if an hundred men in armour had, in succession, fallen down in different parts of the valley. Montmorency, having recovered from the consternation into which this singular noise had thrown him, undauntedly pursued his course, and presently discerned, by the light of the moon, the gleaming of a coat of mail. He immediately made up to the spot, where he found, laid along at the root of an aged oak, whose branches hung darkling over the torrent, a knight wounded and bleeding; his armour was of burnished

steel, by his side there lay a falchion, and a sable shield embossed with studs of gold, and, dipping his casque into the stream, he was endeavouring to allay his thirst, but, through weakness from loss of blood, with difficulty he got it to his mouth. Being questioned as to his misfortune, he shook his head, and unable to speak, pointed with his hand down the glen; at the same moment the shrieks, which had formerly alarmed Montmorency and his attendants, were repeated, apparently at no great distance; and now every mark of horror was depicted on the pale and ghastly features of the dying knight; his black hair, dashed with gore, stood erect, and, stretching forth his hands toward the sound, he seemed struggling for speech, his agony became excessive, and groaning, he dropped dead upon the earth.

The suddenness of this shocking event, the total ignorance of its cause, the uncouth scenery around, and the dismal wailings of distress, which still poured upon the ear with aggravated strength, left room for imagination to unfold its most hideous ideas; yet Montmorency, though astonished, lost not his fortitude and resolution, but determined, following

the direction of the sound, to search for the place whence these terrible screams seemed to issue, and recommending his men to unsheath their swords, and maintain a strict guard, cautiously followed the windings of the glen, until, abruptly turning the corner of an out-jutting crag, they perceived two corses mangled in a frightful manner, and the glimmering of light appeared through some trees that hung depending from a steep and dangerous part of the rock. Approaching a little nearer, the shrieks seemed evidently to proceed from that quarter, upon which, tying their horses to the branches of an oak, they ascended slowly and without any noise towards the light, but what was their amazement, when, by the pale glimpses of the moon, where the eye could penetrate through the intervening foliage, in a vast and yawning cavern, dimly lighted by a lamp suspended from its roof, they beheld half a dozen gigantic figures in ponderous iron armour; their vizors were up, and the lamp, faintly gleaming on their features, displayed an unrelenting sternness capable of the most ruthless deeds. One, who had the aspect, and the garb of their leader, and who, waving his scimetar, seemed menacing the rest, held

on his arm a massy shield of immense circumference, and which, being streaked with recent blood, presented to the eye an object truly terrific. At the back part of the cave and fixed to a brazen ring, stood a female figure, and, as far as the obscurity of the light gave opportunity to judge, of a beautiful and elegant form. From her the shrieks proceeded; she was dressed in white, and struggling violently and in a convulsive manner, appeared to have been driven almost to madness from the conscious horror of her situation. Two of the Banditti were high in dispute, fire flashed from their eyes, and their scimetars were half unsheathed, and Montmorency, expecting that, in the fury of their passion, they would cut each other to pieces, waited the event, but as the authority of their Captain soon checked the tumult, he rushed in with his followers, and, hurling his lance, "Villains," he exclaimed, "receive the reward of cruelty." The lance bounded innocuous from the shield of the leader, who turning quickly upon Montmorency, a severe engagement ensued; they smote with prodigious strength, and the valley resounded to the clangor of their steel. Their falchions, unable to sustain the shock, shivered

into a thousand pieces, when Montmorency, instantly elevating with both hands his shield, dashed it with resistless force against the head of his antagonist; lifeless he dropped prone upon the ground, and the crash of his armour bellowed through the hollow rock.

In the mean time his attendants, although they had exerted themselves with great bravery, and had already dispatched one of the villains, were, by force of numbers, overpowered, and being bound together, the remainder of the Banditti rushed in upon Montmorency just as he had stretched their commander upon the earth, and obliged him also, notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts of valour, to surrender. The lady who, during the rencounter, had fainted away, waked again to fresh scenes of misery at the moment when these monsters of barbarity were conducting the unfortunate Montmorency and his companions to a dreadful grave. They were led, by a long and intricate passage, mid an immense assemblage of rocks, which, rising between seventy and eighty feet perpendicular, bounded on all sides a circular plain, into which no opening was apparent but that through which they came.

The moon shone bright, and they beheld, in the middle of this plain, a hideous chasm; it seemed near a hundred feet in diameter, and on its brink grew several trees, whose branches, almost meeting in the centre, dropped on its infernal mouth a gloom of settled horror. "Prepare to die," said one of the Banditti, "for into that chasm shall ye be thrown; it is of unfathomable depth, and that ye may not be ignorant of the place ye are so soon to visit, we shall gratify your curiosity with a view of it." So saying, two of them seized the wretched Montmorency, and dragging him to the margin of the abyss, tied him to the trunk of a tree, and having treated his associates in the same manner, "look" cried a Banditto with a fiend-like smile, "look and anticipate the pleasures of your journey." Dismay and pale affright shook the cold limbs of Montmorency, and as he leant over the illimitable void, the dew sat in big drops upon his forehead. The moon's rays, streaming in between the branches, shed a dim light, sufficient to disclose a considerable part of the vast profundity, whose depth lay hid, for a subterranean river, bursting with tremendous noise into its womb, occasioned such a mist, from the rising spray, as entirely

to conceal the dreary gulf beneath. Shuddering on the edge of this accursed pit stood the miserable warrior; his eyes were starting from their sockets, and, as he looked into the dank abyss, his senses, blasted by the view, seemed ready to forsake him. Meantime the Banditti, having unbound one of the attendants, prepared to throw him in; he resisted with astonishing strength shrieking aloud for help, and, just as he had reached the slippery margin, every fibre of his body racked with agonising terror, he flung himself with fury backwards on the ground; fierce and wild convulsions seized his frame, which being soon followed by a state of exhaustion, he was in this condition, unable any longer to resist, hurled into the dreadful chasm; his armour striking upon the rock, there burst a sudden effulgence, and the repetition of the stroke was heard for many minutes as he descended down its rugged side.

No words can describe the horrible emotions, which, on the sight of this shocking spectacle, tortured the devoted wretches. The soul of Montmorency sank within him, and, as they unbound his last fellow-sufferer, his eyes shot forth a gleam of vengeful light, and

he ground his teeth in silent and unutterable anguish. The inhuman monsters now laid hold of the unhappy man; he gave no opposition, and, though despair sat upon his features, not a shriek, not a groan escaped him, but no sooner had he reached the brink, than making a sudden effort, he liberated an arm, and grasping one of the villains round the waist, sprang headlong with him into the interminable gulf. All was silent—but at length a dreadful plunge was heard, and the sullen deep howled fearfully over its prey. The three remaining Banditti stood aghast; they durst not unbind Montmorency, but resolved, as the tree to which he was tied grew near the mouth of the pit, to cut it down, and, by that mean, he would fall, along with it, into the chasm. Montmorency, who, after the example of his attendant, had conceived the hope of avenging himself, now saw all possibility of effecting that design, taken away, and as the axe entered the trunk, his anguish became so excessive that he fainted. The villains, observing this, determined, from a malicious prudence, to forbear, as at present he was incapable of feeling the terrors of his situation. They therefore withdrew, and left him to recover at his leisure.

Not many minutes had passed away when, life and sensation returning, the hapless Montmorency awoke to the remembrance of his fate. "Have mercy," he exclaimed, the briny sweat trickling down his pallid features, "oh Christ have mercy;" then looking around him, he started at the abyss beneath, and, shrinking from its ghastly brink, pressed close against the tree. In a little time, however, he recovered his perfect recollection, and, perceiving that the Banditti had left him, became more composed. His hands, which were bound behind him, he endeavoured to disentangle, and, to his inexpressible joy, after many painful efforts, he succeeded so far as to loosen the cord, and, by a little more perseverance, effected his liberty. He then sought around for a place to escape through, but without success; at length, as he was passing on the other side of the chasm, he observed a part of its craggy side, as he thought, illuminated, and, advancing a little nearer, he found that it proceeded from the moon's rays shining through a large cleft of the rock, and at a very inconsiderable depth below the surface. A gleam of hope now broke in upon his despair, and gathering up the ropes which had been

used for himself and his associates, he tied them together, and fastening one end to the bole of a tree, and the other to his waist, he determined to descend as far as the illuminated spot. Horrible as was the experiment, he hesitated not a moment in putting it into execution, for, when contrasted with his late fears, the mere hazard of an accident weighed as nothing and the apprehension that the villains might return before his purpose was secure, accelerated, and gave vigour to his efforts. Soon was he suspended in the gloomy abyss, and neither the roaring of the river, nor the dashing of the spray, intimidated his daring spirit, but, having reached the cleft, he crawled within it, then, loosing the cord from off his body, he proceeded onwards, and, at last, with a rapture no description can paint, discerned the appearance of the glen beneath him. He knelt down, and was returning thanks to heaven for his escape, when suddenly ———

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NUMBER XVIII.

A work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapour of wine—nor to be obtained by the invocation of Memory and her siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his alter to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.

MILTON.

No species of poetry, perhaps, is more difficult of execution than the religious; the natural sublimity of the subject cannot be heightened but by very superior powers, and demands an imagination plastic in the extreme, vast and gigantic on the one hand, tender, luxuriant and beautiful on the other, which can select, and vividly delineate, objects the most contrasted, the graceful inhabitant of heaven, or the appalling possessor of hell, which can, in short,

combine the force and sublimity of Michael Angelo with the sweetness and amenity of Guido Rheni.

The slightest failure too, either in point of language or conception, will frequently, in this province of the poetic art, destroy the whole scope and purport of an elaborate work, for the subject being of the utmost importance and solemnity, and essentially connected with all that is interesting to the mind of man, the most exquisite taste is required in adopting throughout the whole a diction appropriate to the weight of sentiment, and in colouring with a chastity and even severity of style those creations of fancy which are necessary to the constitution of the fable. Any unguarded levity, any want of adaptation in phraseology, or in fiction will immediately be felt, and will not only annihilate the effect intended of the part in which they are introduced, but will materially injure, and throw an air of ridicule over the entire poem. Imbecilities of this kind perpetually disgrace the pages of Quarles, Crashaw, and most of the writers of sacred poesy previous to the age of Milton, and nearly obliterate the pleasure arising from their purer

passages. A vigour of imagination, indeed, and a simplicity in composition and idea adequately combined for the production of a sublime religious poem, form a faculty of rare attainment, and which has been exerted with felicity in only three or four instances since the birth of Christianity, for the reiterated attempts of the poets of Italy in the language of either ancient or modern Rome, are by no means worthy of their subject.

Our celebrated countryman, the immortal MILTON, may therefore be considered as the very first who with true dignity supported the weight of his stupendous theme,

> For Atlantean Spirit proper charge.

Gifted with a mind pre-eminently sublime, and richly stored with all the various branches of learning and science, with an ear attuned to harmony, and a taste chastised by cultivation, the divine bard projected and compleated a poem, which has challenged the admiration of each succeeding age, and is, without exaggeration, the noblest monument of human genius.

With powers inferior to Milton, turgid,

obscure, and epigrammatic, yet with occasional sallies of imagination, and bursts of sublimity that course along the gloom with the rapidity and brilliancy of lightning, YOUNG has in his Night Thoughts become a favorite not only with the multitude here, but with many of the nations upon the continent, for, with the bulk of mankind, there is little discrimination between the creative energy of Milton, and the tumid declamation of Young, or between the varied pauses of highly-finished blank verse and a succession of monotonous lines. Young has, however, the merit of originality, for few authors who have written so much have left fainter traces of imitation, or in the happy hour of inspiration more genuine and peculiar excellence.

The felicity of producing a *sacred epic* that may be thrown into competition with the *Paradise Lost* has been claimed, and justly claimed, by the literati of Germany. KLOPSTOCK, though possessing not the stern and gigantic sublimity of Milton, still elevates the mind by the vigour and novelty of his fiction, and is certainly more tender and pathetic than the English Bard. "The edifice of Milton,"

says the ingenious Herder, "is a stedfast and well-planned building, resting on ancient columns. Klopstock's is an enchanted Dome, echoing with the softest and purest tones of human feeling, hovering between heaven and earth, borne on angels' shoulders. Milton's Muse is Masculine—Klopstock's is a tender woman, dissolving in pious extacies, warbling elegies and hymns.—When music shall acquire among us the highest powers of her art, whose words will she select to utter but those of Klopstock?"* Impartial posterity will probably confirm this opinion of the critic, but omit, as I have done, the epithet *harsh* as applicable to Miltonic numbers; and it will assuredly annul the idea of Herder that Klopstock "has won for the language of his country more powers than the Briton ever suspected his to possess;" for the strength and energy, the varied harmony and beauty of the english language, the words that breathe and burn are displayed with prodigality in the pages of Milton, nor will it be conceded that the language of Germany, as even now improved and polished, is at all superior to the nervous yet

* Herder's Letters on Humanization.

harmonious diction of Great Britain. It is to be lamented however that no version of the *Messiah* at all adequate to the merit of its celebrated author has been yet introduced into our island. Blank verse, cast in the Miltonic mould, would be the only suitable vehicle for the bold and beautiful imagery of this poem, which, when thus clothed, could not fail of exciting the admiration of the public.*

* It is remarkable that the third book of the Messiah opens with an invocation to Light; it therefore immediately courts a comparison with the celebrated address of Milton, in *his* third book, to the same element: both poets have traversed the infernal world, and are approaching the confines of the terrestrial globe. The parallelism will confirm the opinion of Herder with regard to the superior sublimity of the English bard, who in this passage certainly excels himself, and when lamenting his deprivation of sight, an adjunctive circumstance which Klopstock fortunately for himself had it not in his power to introduce, is more pathetic, perhaps, than any other poet. The German is tender, elegant and impressive, the characteristics of his style, according to the critics of his country, throughout the whole of his elaborate work.

For the following translation of the commencement of the third book of the Messiah I am indebted to my friend Mr. Good. Every reader will recollect the parallel invocation in Milton, "Hail holy light" &c' &c.

Once more I hail thee, once behold thee more,
Earth! soil maternal! thee, whose womb of yore
Bore me; and soon, beneath whose gelid breast,
These limbs shall sink in soft and sacred rest.
Yet may I first complete this work begun,
And sing the covenant of th' ETERNAL SON.

From the brief mention of these three divine bards we pass on to the immediate subject of our paper, THE CALVARY OF MR. CUMBERLAND, a work imbued with the genuine spirit of Milton, and destined therefore, most

O! then these lips, his heavenly love that told,
These eyes that oft in streams of rapture roll'd,
Shall close in darkness!—o'er my mouldering clay
A few fond friends their duteous rites ſhall pay,
And with the palm, the laurel's deathless leaf
Deck my light turf, and prove their pious grief.
There shall I sleep, till o'er this mortal dust,
Springs, long announc'd, the morning of the just;
Then, fresh embodied in a purer mold,
Triumphant rise, and brighter scenes behold.

Then! Muse of Sion! who, with potent spell,
Thro' hell hast led me, and return'd from hell,
Still shudd'ring at the voyage:—thou whose eye
Can oft the thoughts of God himself descry,
And, thro' the frown that veils his awful face,
Read the fair lines of love, and heav'nly grace,—
Shine on this soul! that trembles at the sight
Of her own toils, with pure celestial light;
Raise her low powers, that yet, with loftier wing,
The best of men, the SAVIOUR GOD she sing.

In a letter addressed to the Princess Royal of England in 1797 by the Rev. Herbert Croft, he announces a version, line for line, of Klopstock's Messiah in English hexameters, a specimen of which he has given in this epistle. The completion of this undertaking is the more desirable, as he enjoys the advantage of a personal and intimate acquaintance with the German Homer, and can consult him on the meaning of every obscure passage.

probably, to immortality. On this, the latest effort in sacred poetry, and which has not yet met with the attention it so justly merits, we propose offering some general observations, as relative to fable, character, language, &c. and shall afterwards proceed to notice the particular and more striking beauties of each book; a review, which, from the passages adduced, will assuredly tempt the reader to peruse the whole, and probably to place this performance among the choicest products of the Muse.

It has been objected to Milton that in his *Paradise Regained* he has taken too confined a view of the subject, and by restricting the theatre of action to the Temptation in the wilderness, attributed solely to that event the redemption of mankind. To this Milton was probably induced by the charm of contrast, by the desire of shewing the world that in the preceptive and moral as well as in the grand and sublime epic, he was equally pre-eminent; and it must be confessed he has happily succeeded, for the mild yet majestic beauties of the Paradise Regained, its weight of precept and exquisite morality, its richness of sentiment and simplicity of diction, call as loudly

for approbation and applause as the more splendid and terrible graces, the whirlwind and commotion of the prior poem.

What the critics have very unjustly blamed Milton for not effecting, Mr. Cumberland stretching a more ample canvas, has performed, and given to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Saviour, the importance and the consequences they demand.

That the action should be one, entire and great, has been repeated, and approved of, from the days of Aristotle to the present period, and no argument human or divine could better adapt itself to the axiom than the one we are now considering, pregnant as it is with the greatest events, and terminated by a catastrophe, beyond all comparison, to man the most interesting and propitious, for, in strict adhesion to the simple narrative of the Evangelists, the last supper and the resurrection form the limits of the work, and produce the requisite unity. On a subject whose basis is truth itself, and involving the whole compass of our religion, any the smallest deviation from scriptural fact had been injudicious in

the extreme, and even disgusting. The resources of the poet, therefore, the materials of fiction and imagination, were to be drawn from that mine which Milton had so fortunately opened, and which Mr. Cumberland has proved to be still productive of the finest ore, not less rich, nor of inferior quality to that which we have been accustomed so highly and so judiciously to value. The agency of angels and demons, the delineation of the regions appropriated to the blessed or the damned, give ample scope to the genius of the poet, and spring as it were from the very nature of the theme. The term *fable*, therefore, as applied to a poem founded on the religion of Christ, can only with propriety be affixed to the conceptions of the poet, the rest being established on facts which ought to admit of no obliquity or modification. Taking it however as a whole, the result of truth and fiction, it will appear to possess every requisite for epic action,- unity, integrity and magnitude. After an assemblage of the devils to conspire the destruction of Christ, and the delegation of Mammon as the tempter of Iscariot, the Last Supper takes place in strict conformity to the relation of St. John, and which is immediately

followed by the treason of Judas, who, repairing to the Sanhedrim, proposes the betrayal of his master. The priests and elders, after accepting the offer, retire, and Satan and his peers immediately assume their seats, and decree, and perform an ovation to Mammon for his success, but on the appearance of Chemos, who had been stationed as a spy on the Mount of Olives, and had been wounded by the spear of Gabriel, Satan suddenly dissolves the assembly, and rushes forth to encounter that archangel. Christ meanwhile, protected by Gabriel, undergoes the agony in the garden, and upon the approach of Satan this supporting angel prepares to chastise and dismiss him, when Christ, drawing near, by the word of power casts him to the ground in torments. At this moment Judas advances, and Christ is seized, while Satan, unable to rise, bursts into lamentation, till, at length, discovered through the gloom by Mammon, he is assisted, and once more stands erect. Conscious to the power of Christ he prophecies his impending doom, and immediately, lifted from the earth, is hurled by a tremendous tempest to the regions of the damned. The condemnation of Christ, the denial and contrition of

Peter now follow, with an implicit adherence to the gospel narrative, and are succeeded by the remorse of Judas Iscariot, who, instigated by Mammon, destroy's himself, whilst that evil spirit taking wing repairs to the wilderness, convenes the demons, informs them of Satan's expulsion from the earth, and warns them to flight ere the hour of Christ's crucifixion; they accordingly disperse and the crucifixion, witnessed by Gabriel and the angels who are stationed on the mount, immediately ensues. The poet next hastens to describe the descent into the regions of Death whither Christ, borne on the wings of angels, is instantly conveyed. Here, prostrate at the throne of that formidable phantom, whose person and palace are described at large, and whose assistance the enemy of mankind had been in vain imploring, Satan is discovered by the Messiah, and, at his command, hurled by the vindictive angel, into the bottomless pit; its horrors are described, and Death, conscious that his power is overthrown, tenders his crown and key at the feet of the Redeemer, and the revivification of those saints who are destined to the first resurrection immediately commences. These are now received by Christ, who appears to

them enveloped in glory; they pay him homage, and are assured of immortality as the reward of virtue. Abraham confers with Christ, and is shewn the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, as described in the Apocalypse. Christ reascends to earth, and after an address from Gabriel, explaining the purport of the resurrection, and a conference between Moses and that angel, a paradise springs up within the regions of Death, and the poem terminates with the departure of Gabriel.

Such is the outline of this arduous undertaking which, though requiring much judgment and genius to conduct with propriety, appears to be well adapted for epic action, and is free from the objections commonly made to the Paradise Lost of Milton, who has been frequently censured for its melancholy catastrophe, for the abject condition in which our first parents are left, and for having chosen the Devil for his hero. Without enquiry concerning the justness of these remarks, we may observe of Calvary, that it is not obnoxious to similar spleen, the Messiah, though exposed to the machinations of Satan, and suffering all that man could inflict, being repeatedly and finally triumphant.

Nor will it be any ground for rational objection, that the allegorical personage Death acts so conspicuous a part in this poem, for, though Milton has felt the lash of criticism for personification of this kind, in Calvary, the introduction of the King of Terrors was almost a necessary part of the action, few circumstances being more frequently insisted upon by the authors of our Testament than the conquest and humiliation of Death by the Messiah, and the consequent resurrection of his saints.

If we now advert to the *characters* of Mr. Cumberland we may remark that, though not in possession of originality, they are well drawn and well supported. The materials he has made use of, and the models he has copied from, are of transcendant excellence, and to have woven these into a new whole, to have imitated these sublime writings without losing a portion of their first spirit and raciness, is to have achieved a work of difficulty and danger, that claims and will acquire both grateful and durable praise. No characters in the whole range of literature are so exquisitely conceived, so beautifully delineated and coloured, as those of our Saviour in the writings of the

Evangelists, and of Satan in the Paradise Lost. The tender mercy and compassion of our Redeemer, the universal philanthropy and meekness of his character, his pathetic appeals to the virtues and feelings of his auditors, his patient and heroic suffering, his numerous acts of goodness and stupendous power, are given with such touching simplicity of language, with such minuteness and accuracy of detail, with such conviction of the truth and dignity of the theme, that whilst no compositions are so interesting to the uncorrupted heart, none are more pleasing to the purest taste. On the other hand, in a style elevated to the utmost pitch of grandeur, Milton has pourtrayed a Being of terrible sublimity, author of every dreadful and gigantic evil, and contending for the supremacy of heaven; breathing revenge, hatred and despair, armed with archangelic strength, and clothed with the majesty of power. With these tremendous attributes he has mingled such a portion of beauty and grace, of mental activity and invincible courage, that while we gaze and tremble at the awful demon, we feel a thrilling sensation of pleasurable wonder, of admiration and of horror stealing through every nerve.

To bring forward therefore characters such as these, to place them in new situations, to support them in all their original vigour and effect, is a task which superior genius only can perform, and which has been attempted, and with success, in the poem under our consideration.

The palace and person of Death too, Satan seized upon by the vindictive angel, and the punishment to which he is subjected, are painted with the strongest colours of imagination, and the delineation of, and the speeches ascribed to the devils when assembled in the wilderness are characteristic of their attributes, and teem with appropriate imagery. Gabriel and Mammon likewise, are agents of considerable consequence, and do their errands with consummate energy and address, nor are the inferior actors, Caiphas, Iscariot, Peter and Pilate less admirably supported, or pencilled with diminished spirit, though the attitudes and grouping are from scripture.

Having cast a transient glance over the characters, we may proceed to remark, that the sentiments of this work are, in general, such

as, in a composition assuming epic dignity, we expect to meet with. The simplicity of the gospel history is seldom violated, and the sentiments attributed to the superhuman agents are replete with Miltonic vigour and sublimity. There is however something very dreadful, and, we trust, something very much misapprehended, in dwelling upon the idea of *eternal* torments, in teaching that the far greater part of the human race will liquefy in fire through everlasting ages. In the seventh book myriads of miserable beings are represented as plunged into perpetual and unmitigated flames,

——————————that sparkling blaz'd
Up to the iron roof, whose echoing vault
Resounded ever with the dolorous groans
Of the sad crew beneath; Thence might be heard
The wailing suicide's remorseful plaint,
The murderer's yelling scream, and the loud cry
Of tyrants in that fiery furnace hurl'd,
Vain cry! th' unmitigated furies urge
Their ruthless task, and to the cauldron's edge
With ceaseless toil huge blocks of sulpher roll,
Pil'd mountains high to feed the greedy flames.
All these, th' accursed brood of Sin, were once
The guilty pleasures, the false joys, that lur'd
Their sensual votarists to th' infernal pit:
Them their fell mother, watchful o'er the work,

With eye that sleep ne'er closed, and snaky scourge
Still waving o'er their heads, for ever plies
To keep the fiery deluge at its height,
And stops her ears against the clam'rous din
Of those tormented, *who for mercy call*
Age after age, implor'd and still denied.

Our Saviour at the sight of these agonising wretches is described as drawing from his soul

A sigh of natural pity as from man
To man although in merited distress.

But this it seems was a transient sensation, for soon

————————his human sympathy gave place
To judgment better weigh'd and riper thoughts
Congenial with the godhead.

From conception such as this the mind shrinks back with horror, and incredulity alone can sooth the pain it suffers, for, that sin and torture should be *eternal* can neither accord with the justice nor the mercy of the deity, and that a Being so loving to mankind, so melting soft to pity, as our Saviour is always delineated in scripture, should in his divine nature throw off every particle of compassion,

would appear to many worthy and devout christians, and who seek out their salvation with fear and trembling, to convert the God they should adore and love into a perfect Demon. Fortunately however, an opinion so repulsive is neither accordant with reason, nor with religion, and the following observations of the celebrated John Henderson, a man as pious as transcendant in intellectual ability, compleatly and unanswerably refute what every man whose heart is not of adamant would wish to see refuted.

"I lay it down as a maxim," says he, "to be doubted by few, and denied by none, that whosoever doth any thing, foreseeing the certain event thereof, willeth that event. If a parent send children into a wood wherein grow poisonous berries, and *certainly know* they *will* eat of them, it is of no importance in the consideration of common sense, that he cautions, forbids, forewarns, or that they having free-will, *may* avoid the poison. Who will not accuse him of their death in sending them into circumstances where he foreknew it would happen? God foreknows every thing, to his knowledge every thing is certain. Let us

suppose him about to create twenty men: he knows ten of them (or any number) will become vicious, therefore damned, thence inherit the unceasing penalty. Who doubts in such a case that he *wills* the end, who being allmighty and allknowing, does that without which it could not come to pass? But *He* hath sworn by *Himself*, for *He* could swear by no greater, that *He* willeth not the death of him that dieth: that is, *He* willeth it not finally or simply as death, or destruction irrecoverable. And if it occur it is a part of his economy of grace, a ministration unto life; for *He* hath declared, that his will is, that *all* should be saved; therefore the doctrine which forges any contrary will, falsifies supreme unchangeable truth."

"11. I lay it down as another indubitable maxim, that whatsoever is done by a Being of the divine attributes, is intended by his goodness, conducted by his wisdom, and accomplished by his power to a good end. Now all possible good ends may be enumerated under three words—Honour—Pleasure—Benefit; and every one to whom good can accrue from endless punishment must be either *punisher*,

punished, or *fellow-creature* to the *punished.* Let us try every one of the former three to each of the latter."

"1. The *Punisher.* Would it be a greater *honour* to the *punisher* to have his creatures miserable than happy? I will venture to say by proxy for every Heart, No. Would it be greater *pleasure?* No. And *benefit* to Him can be none"

"2. *Punished.* Endless punishment can be neither *honour*, *pleasure*, nor *benefit* to them, though punishment on my scheme* will be of endless benefit-"

"3. The *Fellow-creatures.* It will be as *honourable* to them as to have one of their family hanged. If they have *pleasure* in it, they must have a diabolical heart, and must by the just searcher of hearts be committed to the place prepared for the Devil and his Angels. *Benefit* they can have none, except safety, and that is fully answered by the great gulph, by confinement till reformation."

* For the purpose of producing repentance and reformation.

"As then unceasing torments can answer no possible good end to any one in the universe, I conclude them to be neither the will nor work of God. Could I suppose them, I must believe them to be inflicted by a wantonness or cruelty, which words cannot express, nor heart conceive. But let this be the comfort of every humble soul, Known unto God are all his works; the Judge of all shall do right; and *He* ordereth all things well. It hath pleased *Him* to reconcile *all things* to *Himself*. Therefore to *Him* shall bow *every* knee; and *every* tongue shall say, "In the Lord I have strength, and I have righteousness." †

There appears to be an inconsistency likewise, in representing Judas Iscariot as a subtile metaphysician, and soliloquising profoundly on the doctrines of Free-Will and Philosophical Necessity. Milton, it is true, has painted

† A celebrated controversy of this kind took place between Petit-pierre and his brethren, the clergy of Neufchatel, in which the former was supported by Frederick the Great. The King however, Petit-pierre, and Marshal Keith, with their doctrine of final salvation were, after long discussion, obliged to quit the field; the clergy maintained their privileges, and the King declared that "puisqu'ils avoient si fort à cœur d'etre damnés eternellement," he should no longer oppose their determination.

Williams's Tour in Switzerland, vol. ii. 148.

his demons as disputing on these intricate topics, and in his third book has introduced the deity with a view to their solution, but Mr. Cumberland should have remembered that Judas was both ignorant and uneducated, and consequently unapt for nice and subtile disquisitions.

Another impropriety, though of a different kind, occurs in the character of Satan, who, notwithstanding his acute distress and torture, finds leisure for reference to the fables of pagan antiquity, and draws a comparison between himself and some of their most romantic personages.

Ah! who will lift me from this iron bed,
On which *Prometheus-like* for ever link'd
And rivetted by dire necessity
I 'm doom'd to lie.——

Who will unbrace
This scalding mail that burns my tortur'd breast
Worse than the shirt of Nessus?

Now it is contrary to nature and experience to suppose that a person in acute pain should have inclination thus fancifully to comment

upon and compare his sufferings, and though ancient mythology and fiction may, in the way of ornament, embellish the narrative part of a religious poem, they should never be referred to as matters of undoubted fact, and especially in a speech of a chief character whilst labouring under the utmost agony of mind and body.

It hath already been observed that in general, Mr. Cumberland has copied the simplicity, and even adhered to the very words of scripture, but in a few instances he has deviated from this judicious rule, and in no place more than where, recording the denial of Peter, he exclaims.

——————————Hark! again
The cock's loud signal echoes back the lye
In his convicted ear; the prophet bird
Strains his recording throat, and up to heaven
Trumpets the treble perjury and claps
His wings in triumph o'er presumption's fall.

How preferable, how simple, yet how beautiful and expressive the language of St. Luke, "Immediately the cock crew, and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and he

went out and wept bitterly." The imagery of Mr. Cumberland would make a figure in the works of Marino, but is totally unworthy of the dignity and sublimity of the theme he has chosen. Immediately subsequent, however, to these faulty lines occurs a passage of the most exquisite taste and beauty, and which in justice to our author, we shall quote in this place. They form an admirable comment upon these words of the Evangelist—"the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." The poet supposes himself addressing the erring disciple and exclaims

——————————Look upon his eyes!
Behold they turn on thee: Them dost thou know?
Their language canst thou read and from them draw
The conscious reminiscence thou disownst?
Mark, is their sweetness lost? Ah! no; they beam
Celestial grace, a sanctity of soul
So melting soft with pity, such a gleam
Of love divine attemp'ring mild reproof,
Where is the man, that to obtain that eye
Of mercy on his sins would not forego
Life's dearest comforts to embrace such hope?
O death, death! where would be thy sting, or where
These awful tremblings, which thy coming stirs
In my too conscious breast, might I aspire
To hope my judge would greet me with that look?

NUMBER XIX.

Tartaream intendit vocem; qua protinus omnis
Contremuit "tellus."

VIRGIL.

Come d'Autunno si levan le foglie
L'una appresso dell' altra, infin che' l rame
Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie;
Similemente il mal seme—
Gittansi——ad una ad una——

DANTE.

THE fable, characters and sentiments having been noticed in the preceding number, a few observations on the versification and diction of Calvary will conclude these preliminary remarks, and, in the first place, let it be observed, that of the various kinds of metre in which the poets of Great Britain have delighted to compose, none is of such difficult execution as blank verse, none more requiring a practiced

ear, or a more extensive knowledge of language and of style. Two great masters in this mode of composition we possess, Shakspeare and Milton, both pre-eminent in their respective walks, but the former perhaps more generally harmonious. In Milton, a style elaborate and abounding in transposition, mingled with foreign idiom, and scientific terms, and frequently clogged with parenthesis, admits not of that facility and flow so conspicuous in the dramatic bard, whose works present us with the most musical and felicitous specimens of blank verse we can boast of. Not that Milton is deficient in harmony, for his Paradise Lost displays, more than any other poem perhaps, every variety of pause and rhythm, but neither his subject, nor his genius led to that sweetness and simplicity of diction so wonderfully captivating in the drama of his predecessor. Energy, majesty, a deeper and severer strain of harmony pervade the pages of Milton; his the full-toned melody of the pealing organ, Shakspeare's the softer breathings of the lute or harp, for though surrounded by magic and incantation, and all the horrors of supernatural agency, Shakspeare still preserves a style free from intricacy and melting with the sweetest cadence.

To throw, therefore, these different modes of composition into one work; in the dramatic parts to assume the language and style of Shakspeare, in the more elevated and epic portion, the diction and manner of Milton, appears to have been the aim of Mr. Cumberland, and an attempt too, in which he has in a great measure succeeded. The speeches of the Demons in the first book, and those of Mammon and Iscariot in the second and third, are woven in the loom of Shakspeare, and have imbibed much of his colouring and spirit, whilst the latter part of the third and fourth books, and the greater part of the seventh, are admirable copies of the Miltonic versification and imagery. Various passages, which will shortly be selected from the different books, will fully prove the truth of this remark; a number of phrases likewise, interspersed through the body of the work, whisper whence they have been taken, and are often indeed exact transcriptions, though well chosen and well introduced, from the leaves of our immortal Dramatist. To quote many of these would be superfluous; two or three being adequate to give the reader an idea of their nature and manner, either as literal or liberal imitations.

——————Heav'n and earth!
Must I remember?——

It leads to death, it marshals him the road
To that oblivious bourne whence none return.

I saw large drops and gouttes of bloody sweat
Incarnadine the dust on which they fell.

Weary days and nights
I' ve minister'd to him without reward,
And weary miles full many travel'd o'er,
Fainting and pinch'd with hunger, then at night,
When the wild creatures of the earth find rest
And covert in their holes, houseless have watch'd
Amidst the shock of elements, and brav'd
Storms, which the mail'd rhinoceros did not dare
Unshelter'd to abide.

Perspicuity, that first requisite of a good style either in prose or verse, Mr. Cumberland has seldom violated, and his similies and metaphors are, for the most part, appropriate, bold and accurate. Some instances, however, might be culled in which the metaphor is obscure and

broken: the following may be adduced, and will suffice, as a specimen of these defects.

———————————His voice
Now falter'd and his thoughts unsettled, wild
And driv'n at random like a wreck, could grasp
No helm of reason.

A thought *grasping* the helm of reason is certainly a strained and incongruous metaphor, but of faults of this kind there are but few, for it may be said of the general style of this poem, that it is chaste, clear and flowing; in its dramatic parts energic, in its epic, dignified and sublime, free from inflation, or harsh transposition, and forming a happy union between the styles of Shakspeare and of Milton.

We shall now proceed, according to promise, to select the more striking beauties of each book; from whence the reader will be enabled to judge for himself of the propriety of the above observations, and of the real and peculiar merits of the work itself.

The first book, which is entirely occupied by the assembling of the devils, forms a closer

copy of Milton than any of the succeeding ones; the characters and employment of these agents being very similar to those in the first and second books of Paradise Lost. We shall however find sufficient variety to attract attention, and to denote the operation of considerable genius.

Satan prowling the wilderness by night, arrives at the very spot on which he had formerly tempted Christ, which giving rise to reflection of no very pleasant nature, he vents his despair in soliloquy. Determined however to revenge and repair his defeat he ascends a lofty mountain, and calls together, from every quarter of the globe, his fallen companions.

So loud he call'd that to the farthest bounds
Of pagan isle or continent, was heard
His voice re-echoing thro' the vault of heav'n.

The demons, obedient to his command, flocking together, the poet beautifully adds

Now glimm'ring twilight streak'd the Eastern sky
For he, that on his forehead brings the morn,
Star crowned Phosphorus, had heard the call,
And with the foremost stood.

An invocation to his Muse now follows, in which allusions to Milton's blindness and his own age are introduced in a pleasing manner.

Come, Muse, and to your suppliant's eyes impart
One ray of that pure light, which late you pour'd
On the dark orbs of your immortal Bard
Eclips'd by drop serene: Conduct me now
Me from my better days of bold emprize
Far in decline, and with the hoary hand
Of Time hard stricken, yet adventuring forth
O'er Nature's limits into worlds unseen,
Peopled with shadowy forms and phantoms dire:
Oh! bear me on your pinions in this void,
Where weary foot ne'er rested; and behold!
All hell bursts forth: Support me, or I sink.

No task is attended with so much danger and difficulty as that of emulating the design and colouring of a great master; the comparison can be immediately drawn, and seldom is it to the advantage of the daring adventurer who thus presumes to cope with acknowledged excellence. The consultations of the devils in Paradise Lost and in Calvary bear the closest affinity; the active personages are the same, Satan, Baal, Moloch, Belial and Mammon are the speakers in both, nor was it possible for Mr. Cumberland to deviate with propriety

from the manners and attributes which Milton has chosen to ascribe to them. There is however added, and with consummate taste, much that is pictoresque, much that is dramatic, and as the views with which the demons consult are not exactly the same, injury to God and man in Milton being attempted through the fall of Eve, in Cumberland through the destruction of Christ, scope is left for, and has been occupied by, new imagery and new argument. The author of Calvary therefore, notwithstanding the pre-descriptions of Milton has ventured to give new portraits of his orators, and it will be necessary, that we may judge of his merit and success, to contrast them with the pictures in Paradise Lost; a comparison that will furnish no inutile entertainment, and clearly shew what judgment may achieve though in a walk already beaten by the footsteps of Genius. These sketches therefore I shall place alternately and commence with Milton.

First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parent's tears,
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd thro' fire
To his grim idol.

MILTON.

————————Moloch in the van,
Mail'd at all points for war, with spear and helm
And plumed crest, and garments roll'd in blood,
Flam'd like a meteor,

CUMBERLAND.

————————————Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopt off
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshippers:
Dagon his name, sea monster, upward man
And downward fish.

MILTON.

——Dagon, giant god, amidst the ranks,
Like Teneriff or Etna, proudly tower'd:
Dagon of Gath and Askalon the boast
In that sad flight, when on Gilboa's mount
The shield of Saul was vilely thrown away,
And Israel's beauty perish'd.

CUMBERLAND.

Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood
Or altar smok'd; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?

In courts and palaces he also reigns
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage: And when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

MILTON.

But now a fairer form arrests the eye
Of hells despotic lord: his radiant vest
Of Tyrian purple, studded thick with gems,
Flow'd graceful: He for courts was form'd, for feasts,
For ladies' chambers and for amorous sports;
He lov'd not camps nor the rude toils of war;
Belial his name; around his temples twin'd
A wreath of roses, and, where'er he pass'd
His garments fann'd a breeze of rich perfume:
No ear had he for the shrill-toned trump,
Him the soft warble of the Lydian flute
Delighted rather, the love-soothing harp,
Sappho's loose song and the Aonian Maids
And zoneless Graces floating in the dance;
Yet from his lips sweet eloquence distill'd,
As honey from the bee.

CUMBERLAND.

In the two first quotations few, perhaps, will deny to Mr. Cumberland a greater warmth and beauty of conception, and in the third he is

equal, though not superior to Milton, but in the following portrait of Baal, he certainly sinks beneath his celebrated predecessor.

——————————With grave
Aspéct he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state, deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noon-tide air.

MILTON.

——————————Beside him one
Of towering stature and majestic port,
Himself a host: his black and curling locks
Down his herculean shoulders copious flow'd;
In glittering brass upon his shield he bore
A kingly eagle, ensign of command,
Baal his name, second to none in state
Save only his great chieftain, worshipp'd long
In Babylon, till Daniel drove him thence
With all his gluttonous priests; exalted since
High above all the idol gods of Greece,
Thron'd on Olympus, and his impious hand
Arm'd with the thunder.

CUMBERLAND.

The debate now ensues, in which the speeches though by no means so sublime as those in Milton, are strongly characteristic and well supported. Moloch, as in Paradise Lost, after making a furious oration, is succeeded by Belial, and as the passage in Milton delineating these demons has been justly admired, we shall transcribe it here with the corresponding one in Calvary, nor have we any hesitation in affirming that Mr. Cumberland has much improved upon our divine bard, and thrown his contrasted demons into much more pictoresque and dramatic attitudes.

He ended frowning, and his look denounc'd
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than Gods. On the other side uprose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seem'd
For dignity compos'd and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow.

MILTON.

Breathless he paus'd, so rapid was the pulse
Of his high-beating heart he stood as one
Choak'd and convuls'd with rage; when as he ceas'd,
He smote his mailed habergeon so loud,
Hell's armed legions heard, and shook their spears
Betok'ning war.——

——————————Yet not long
His triumph, for now Belial from the ranks
Graceful advanc'd, and as he put aside
His purple robe in act to speak, the throng,
Such was the dazzling beauty of his form,
Fell back a space.

CUMBERLAND.

Belial in his speech having suggested the propriety of employing Mammon as a tempter of Christ's disciples, Satan adopts the hint and calls upon that Spirit to effect the seduction of Iscariot. Mammon accepts the office, and Satan filled with enthusiasm and fancied triumph exclaims

————Prophetic visions burst upon me:
I see the traitor Judas with a band
Of midnight ruffians seize his peaceful Lord:
They drag him to the bar, accuse, condemn;
He bleeds, he dies! Darkness involves the rest.

The exultation of this tremendous Being, his self-delusion, and the obscurity that still rests upon his hopes, are finely contrived, and give additional interest to the part he performs. Mammon meanwhile departs on his embassy,

————————————no longer now
Crouching with age and pain, but nerv'd anew,
As with a spell transform'd, erect he stood
With towering stature tallest of the throng,
And looks of high supremacy and state.
And now from either shoulder he unfurl'd
His wide-stretch'd pinions, and uprising swift
Tower'd in mid-air; the host with loud acclaim
Hail'd his ascent; he on the well-pois'd wing
Hover'd awhile, till from his cloudy heighth
Sweeping the wide horizon he descried
Far in the west the holy city of God,
His destin'd port, then to the orient sun
Turn'd his broad vans, and plied their utmost speed.

Though the first book from the nature of its plan has, as we have already observed, necessarily the air of a copy, yet the oratorical parts possess very considerable merit, and exhibit much adaptation both in style and sentiment. The language of Belial melts with voluptuousness, and in strains of the softest cadence he still flatters himself with an eternal reign, whilst Moloch breathes nothing but inexorable revenge and hatred of the blackest hue, The terrific traits in the character of Satan are strongly marked, and he maintains his supremacy in the synod for matchless sin

and subtlety, whilst Mammon embraces his arduous mission, and expatiates on his indefatigable and avaricious labours with great energy and triumph. Chemos, the sin of Moab, and the Zidonian Goddess Ashtoreth, are likewise distinguished in the croud, and the former will again appear performing no unimportant part.

The temptation of Judas and the Last Supper form the subjects of the second book, which opens with Mammon under the disguise of a venerable Levite. With infinite address he stimulates the avarice and discontent of Iscariot, and obtains a promise of his final answer before the priests and elders that evening. The dialogue is carried on with much art and spirit; the subtlety and eloquence of the Fiend, the envy, avarice and revenge of the Disciple, are strikingly drawn, and the changes wrought upon him through the influence of this infernal agent marked with precision, The language of Mammon is impressive and powerfully appeals to the ruling frailty of his wretched auditor.

——————————Alas for him
Who serves a master, that———

Makes poverty his passport into heaven,
And bids us throw away life's present means
For doubtful chance of interest after life;
And art thou of all reason so bereft
As to account prosperity a crime,
Or think none blest but him, whose every step
Through misery's thorny path is mark'd with blood?
O son of Simon, take thy last resolve;
Either resign thy body to the worm,
And die with Christ, or him renounce, and live
Rich, honour'd, prosperous, and enjoy the world.
———————————————Throw aside
That beggar's purse, your starving office spurn,
Serve God's high priest, whose treasury is full;
Cast those few mites away, the scanty dole
Of some contaminating leper's hand,
For which you bid God heal him and pass on;
Whilst he, good credulous soul, cries out amain,
As powerful fancy works, Lo! I am clean;
Behold a miracle! But gold performs
Greater and happier miracles than this:
Gold with a touch can heal the mind's disease,
Quicken the slow-paced blood, and make it dance
In tides of rapture through each thrilling vein;
Cast out that worst of demons, poverty,
And with a spell exorcise the sad heart,
Haunted with spectres of despair and spleen.
If then this prize can tempt thee, if thy soul
Still thirsts for life, for riches, for repose,
If in thy breast there dwells that manly scorn,

Which slighted merit feels, when envious pride
Thrusts it aside to build th' unworthy up,
Now, now assert it; from a Master turn,
Who turns from thee, who before thee exalts
Thy meaner brethren, Peter, James and John:
On them his partial smile for ever beams,
They have his love, his confidence, his heart;
Of them revolting he might well complain,
Of thee he cannot; thine were just revenge:
He is no traitor, who resents a wrong;
Who shares no confidence, can break no trust.
Bid conscience then be still, let no weak qualms
Damp thy reviving spirit; but when night
Wraps her dark curtain round this busy world,
Come thou to Caiphas.——

The remainder of the book is occupied in the narration of the Last Supper, in which there is almost a literal adherence to the Gospel of St. John. To have materially altered the language of Scripture on such a subject, or to have tinged with the hues of fancy, events so solemn and momentous, so accurately related and known, would have been highly injudicious. All that was left to the poet therefore, were the charms of versification, and the liberty of retouching and heightening those parts of the picture that seemed to demand more powerful expression. A most pleasing portrait of

our Saviour, and which combines the chaste simplicity of Raphael with the sweetness of Corregio, is thus finished from the outline of scripture:

——————————————All eyes
Were center'd on the Saviour's face divine,
Which with the brightness of the Godhead mix'd
Traces of human sorrow, and display'd
The workings of a mind, where mercy seem'd
Stuggling to reconcile some mortal wrong
To pardon and forbearance: Such a look
Made silence sacred, every tongue was mute;
E'en Peter's zeal forbore the vent of words,
Or spent itself in murmurs half supprest.
At length the meek Redeemer rais'd his eyes,
Where gentle resignation, tempering grief,
Beam'd grace ineffable on all around.

After an awful and pathetic address of Christ to his disciples, and an invocation to the Father in their behalf, the poet thus beautifully describes their effect:

So spake the Lord, and with these gracious words
His faithful remnant cheer'd, for soft they fell
As heav'n's blest dew upon the thirsty hills,
And sweet the healing balm which they distill'd
On sorrow-wounded souls.

NUMBER XX.

> Itene maledetti al vostro regno,
> Regno di pene, e di perpetua morte:
> E siano in quegli a voi dovuti chiostri
> Le vostre guerre, et i trionfi vostri
>
> TASSO.

THE necessity of strictly adhering to the events, and frequently to the very words of scripture, must unavoidably damp the excursive spirit of the poet, and compel him to the task of mere imitation. In the last book little could with propriety be added to the circumstantial detail of the Evangelist, who, in a style abounding in the most exquisite simplicity and pathos, has faithfully recorded every word and action of his divine Master, but the treason of Judas, the subject of the third, admitting more embellishment from the stores of imagination, accordingly presents the reader with much

novel imagery, and much dramatic and epic machinery. The soliloquies of Iscariot, though rather too metaphysical, are well conceived, and the debates of the Sanhedrim are animated and eloquent, whilst the harangue of Judas when proposing the betrayal of Christ, is throughout nervous, and glows with Shakesperian energy and phrase. The fiery and bigotted Caiphas forms an excellent poetic character; his sentiments are inflamed with the fiercest enthusiasm and zeal, and his gestures betray the wild agitation of his soul, rendered still more striking from the mild and rational opposition of Nicodemus, whose philanthropy and tolerating policy serve but to encrease the storm which rages in the bosom of this implacable priest.

On the breaking up of the unhallowed meeting the poet has admirably conceived and described Satan and his Peers occupying the seats of its persecuting members.

———————————Clear the hall,
Yield up your seats, ye substituted fiends;
Hence, minor demons! give your masters place!
  And hark! the King of Terrors speaks the word,

He calls his shadowy princes, they start forth,
Expand themselves to sight and throng the hall,
A synod of infernals: Forms more dire
Imagination shapes not, when the wretch,
Whom conscience haunts, in the dead hour of night,
Whilst all is dark and silent round his bed,
Sees hideous phantoms in his feverish dream,
That stare him into madness with fix'd eyes
And threat'ning faces floating in his brain.

Mammon, having prospered in his attempt upon Iscariot, Satan in a speech of exultation and triumph bestows the most lavish encomiums on that spirit, and decrees an ovation in honour of his success. The following description in which the Minstrels are represented as chanting their hymn, is given in verse of very harmonious structure, and in a vein of the purest poetry; the concluding lines are peculiarly excellent.

————————From either side the throne
Upon the signal a seraphic choir
In equal bands came forth; the minstrels strike
Their golden harps; swift o'er the sounding strings
Their flying fingers sweep, whilst to the strain
Melodious voices, though to heavenly airs
Attun'd no longer, still in sweet accord
Echo the festive song, now full combin'd

Pouring the choral torrent on the ear,
In parts responsive now warbling by turns
Their sprightly quick divisions, swelling now
Through all the compass of their tuneful throats
Their varying cadences, as fancy prompts.
Whereat the Stygian herd, like them of old
Lull'd by the Theban minstrel, stood at gaze
Mute and appeas'd, for music hath a voice,
Which ev'n the devils obey, and for a while
Sweet sounds shall lay their turbid hearts asleep,
Charm'd into sweet oblivion and repose.
The praise of Mammon the rapt seraphs sung
And Gold's almighty pow'r; free flow'd the verse;
No need to call the Muse, for all were there,
Apollo and the Heliconian Maids,
And all that pagan poet e'er invok'd
Were present to the song. Above the flight
Of bold Alcæus, Tisias bard divine,
Or Pindar's strain Olympic, high it soar'd
In dithyrambic majesty sublime.

Chemos now rushing in wounded by the spear of Gabriel, who had detected that demon as a spy on the Mount of Olives, puts an end to the plaudits of the Synod, and Satan, infuriated by the appearance and relation of Chemos, determines to encounter Gabriel, and boasts himself superior in prowess to that archangel in terms the most galling and spirited.

The scars by this sharp sword in battle dealt
Are the best honours Gabriel hath to vaunt;
The brightest laurels on his brow are those
I planted when in equal fight I deign'd
To measure spears with such inferior foe.
Doth Gabriel think God's favour can reverse
Immutable pre-eminence, and raise
His menial sphere to that, in which I shone
Son of the morning? Doth he vainly hope
Exil'd from heav'n we left our courage there,
Or lost it in our fall, or that hell's fires
Have parch'd and wither'd our shrunk sinews up?
Delusive hope! the warrior's nerve is strung
By exercise, by pain, by glorious toil:
The torrid clime of hell, its burning rock,
Its gulph of liquid flames, in which we roll'd,
Have calcin'd our strong hearts, breath'd their own fires
Into our veins, and forg'd those nerves to steel,
Which heav'n's calm ether, her voluptuous skies
And frequent adorations well nigh smooth'd
To the soft flexibility of slaves,
Till bold rebellion shook its fetters off,
And with their clangor rais'd so brave a storm,
That God's eternal throne rock'd to its base.

Dismissing the council, therefore, he calls for his arms.

Tow'ring he stood, the Majesty of Hell,
Dark o'er his brows thick clouds of vengeance roll'd,
Thunder was in his voice, his eyes shot fire,
And loud he call'd for buckler and for spear;
These bold Azazel bore, enormous weight,
For Atlantean spirit proper charge:
With eager grasp he seiz'd the towering mast,
And shook it like a twig, then with a frown,
That aw'd the stoutest heart, gave sign for all
Strait to disperse, and vanish'd from their sight.

The idea of this infernal synod is bold and original, and the triumph of Mammon with the honours paid him, the indignation of Satan on the appearance of Chemos, and his arming to encounter Gabriel, are highly wrought, and dilate the mind by the vigour and grandeur of the fiction. The character of Satan here unfolds itself wrapt in that terrible sublimity and splendour we so much admire in the pages of Milton, and whose lustre, we shall find not only unimpaired as we proceed, but beaming with still greater intensity, whilst the meek and gentle demeanour of our Saviour, though armed with unlimited power, his severe sufferings and unparalleled forbearance, form a contrast which extends throughout the work, and greatly contributes to the general effect.

The fourth book, upon which we are about to enter, and the seventh, are perhaps the most magnificent in the work, abounding in the creations of fancy, in the sublime and wildly awful exertion of superhuman force and power. Our present subject, The Agony in the Garden, is worked up with great strength of imagination, and with the most judicious embellishments on the hints of scripture. St. Luke in his narrative of this part of our Saviour's sufferings, having recorded that "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him," Mr. Cumberland has given this office to Gabriel, whom we have seen in the preceding book putting to flight Chemos the spy of hell, and who in the present is represented as discovering Satan near the same place who, after the dispersion of the demons in the hall of the Sanhedrim, had thus stationed himself in pursuance of his threats. The fiend confident in his own power and courage, and dreading no being save the Almighty, disdains concealment, and approaches the spot where Christ is praying in agony; but the moment our Saviour takes the mysterious cup he feels his strength, as it were by enchantment, blasted; his spear and shield weigh down his

arm slack and unnerved, and in this situation

——Struck down of Heav'n and quell'd

he is met by Gabriel, who reproves him for his impious temerity and warns him to be gone. Satan enraged by the contempt and reproaches of the archangel, and indignant at being found baffled and imbecile, thus answers his celestial opponent:

Since this angelic form, from death exempt,
Sometimes shall yield to aches and transient pains
And natural ailments for a while endur'd,
What wonder if etherial spirit like me,
Pent in this atmosphere and fain to breathe
The lazy fogs of this unwholesome earth,
Pine for his native clime? What, if he droop,
Worn out with care and toil? Wert thou as I
Driv'n to and fro, and by God's thunder hurl'd
From Heav'n's high ramparts, would that silken form
Abide the tossing on hell's fiery lake?
Hadst thou, like me, travers'd the vast profound
Of ancient Night, and beat the weary wing
Through stormy Chaos, voyage rude as this
Would ruffle those fine plumes. I've kept my course
Through hurricanes, the least of which let loose
On this firm globe would winnow it to dust,
Snap like a weaver's thread the mighty chain,
That links it to heav'n's adamantine floor,
And whirl it through the Infinite of Space.
And what hast thou, soft Cherub, done the whilst?

What are thy labours? What hast thou achiev'd?
Heav'n knows no winter, there no tempests howl;
To breathe perpetual spring, to sleep supine
On flow'ry beds of amaranth and rose,
Voluptuous slavery, was Gabriel's choice:
His bosom never drew th' indignant sigh,
That rent my heart, when call'd to morning hymn
I paid compulsive homage at God's throne,
Warbling feign'd hallelujahs to his praise.
Spirits of abject mould, and such art thou,
May call this easy service, for they love
Ignoble ease; to me the fulsome task
Was bitterest slavery, and though I fell,
I fell opposing; exil'd both from heav'n
Freedom and I shar'd the same glorious fall.
Go back then to thy drudgery of praise,
Practice new canticles and tune thy throat
To flattery's fawning pitch; leave me my groans,
Leave me to teach these echoes how to curse;
Here let me lie and make this rugged stone
My couch, my canopy this stormy cloud,
That rolls stern winter o'er my fenceless head;
'Tis freedom's privilege, nor tribute owes,
Nor tribute pays to Heav'n's despotic king.

Nothing can exceed the energy and imagery of this taunting speech, and which even in Milton would have been selected as one of his noblest passages. The sublime courage and despair of this demon are here drawn with a

masterly hand, and excite the highest admiration, though mingled with horror, at the wild majesty and intrepidity of his character.

Whilst Satan is thus speaking our Saviour draws nigh, and the effect of his approach on the enemy of God and man is painted with the terrific pencil of a Spagnioletti.

——————————————The fiend
Or e'er the awful presence met his eye
Shivering, as one by sudden fever seiz'd,
Turn'd deadly pale; then fell to earth convuls'd.
Dire were the yells he vented, fierce the throes
That writh'd his tortur'd frame, whilst through the
seams
And chinks that in his jointed armour gap'd,
Blue sulph'rous flames in livid flashes burst,
So hot the hell within his fuel'd heart,
Which like a furnace seven times heated rag'd.

Christ now addresses the prostrate demon, admonishes him that his reign on earth is over, that his dwelling is prepared in hell, and that there when they meet he must expect his doom; meanwhile Judas advancing, the betrayal and seisure of Christ follow according to the scripture narrative, and Satan left rolling in torments and unable to rise from the rock on which he

had been cast by the power of Christ, bursts out into lamentation; in vain implores relief, and wails his cruel boon of immortality.

Will not some pitying earthquake gulph me down
To where the everlasting fountains sleep,
That in those wat'ry caverns I might slake
These fires, that shrivel my parch'd sinews up?
————————————Oh! for pity
Grant me a moment's interval of ease,
Avenging, angry Deity! Draw back
Thy red right hand, that with the light'ning arm'd
Thrust to my heart makes all my boiling blood
Hiss in my veins.——

His reflections on the enormity of his conduct, the guilt and misery he had occasioned, and on the improbability of repentance, or of mercy, are forcibly expressed, and are immediately succeeded by the appearance of Mammon to whom Satan applies for assistance in rising from the ground; this aid that evil spirit readily grants

————————————In his strong grasp
He seiz'd his giant limbs in armour clad
Of adamant and gold, a ponderous wreck:
Earth trembled with the shock; dire were the groans
Hell's Monarch vented, horrible the pains,

That rack'd his stiffen'd joints; yet on he toil'd
Till by Heav'n's sufferance rather than by aid
Of arm angelic once again he rear'd
His huge Titanian stature to the skies
And stood.

Mammon congratulates his leader on being raised from the bed of torture, and endeavours to console him. Satan in reply acknowledges the power and divinity of Christ, predicts his own approaching doom and exclaims

——————————Now, ev'n now,
I feel a nature in me, not mine own,
That is my master and against my will
Enforces truths prophetic from my tongue,
Making me reverence whom in heart I hate:
I feel that now, though lifted from the ground,
I stand or move or speak but as he wills,
By influence not by freedom: I perceive
These exhalations that the night breathes on me,
Are loaded with the vaporous steams of hell;
I scent them in the air, and well I know
The angel of destruction is abroad.

Having said thus, he commissions Mammon to warn the partners of his fall of their impending ruin should they presume to witness the crucifixion and death of Christ, and then promising to Mammon a long and prosperous

reign on earth, a scene of tremendous sublimity and terror ensues, that, whether its conception or execution be considered, certainly merits every encomium.

So spake the parting fiend in his last hour
Prophetic, father though he were of lies:
To him the inferior demon answer none
Attempted, but in ghastly silence stood
Gazing with horror on his chieftain's face,
That chang'd all hues by fits, as when the north
With nitrous vapours charg'd, convulsive shoots
It's fiery darts athwart the trembling pole,
Making heav'n's vault a canopy of blood;
So o'er the visage of the exorcis'd fiend
Alternate gleams like meteors came and went;
And ever and anon he beat his breast,
That quick and short with lab'ring pulses heav'd.
One piteous look he upward turn'd, one sigh
From his sad heart he fain had sent to heav'n,
But ere the hopeless messenger could leave
His quivering lips, by sudden impulse seiz'd
He finds himself uplifted from the earth;
His azure wings, to sooty black now chang'd,
In wide expanse from either shoulder stretch
For flight involuntary: Up he springs
Whirl'd in a fiery vortex round and round;
As when the Lybian wilderness caught up
In sandy pillar by the eddying winds
Moves horrible, the grave of man and beast;

Him thus ascending the fork'd light'ning smites
With sidelong volley, whilst loud thunders rock
Heav'n's echoing vault, when all at once, behold!
Caught in the stream of an impetuous gust
High in mid-air, swift on the level wing
Northward he shoots and like a comet leaves
Long fiery track behind, speeding his course
Strait to the realms of Chaos and old Night,
Hell-bound and to Tartarean darkness doom'd.

Mammon shocked at the dreadful fate of his chieftain, and trembling for himself, escapes under covert of the night.

It will immediately be perceived that for the major part of this book we are indebted to the genius and enthusiasm of the poet, who, in a bold and vigorous excursion into the regions of imagination, has presented us with a picture of the most transcendent sublimity and which has nothing to fear from a comparison with the productions of his master and model. The interviews between Gabriel and Satan, and Mammon and the Arch fiend, are two of the best wrought scenes in the compass of poetry, and no prejudice or spleen, be they ever so malignant, can hope to blast the laurels due to their conception.

NUMBER XXI.

———————Eternal wrath
Burnt after him to the bottomless pit.
MILTON.

MUCH criticism has been bestowed on the question, whether an epic poet should indulge in description of, or reflections on his own person or circumstances. The severer writers, from the example of Homer and Virgil, have decided in the negative, but it is evident Milton thought otherwise, and in the opening of his third book, and in strains the most pathetic and sublime, laments his deprivation of sight. Several other passages of a similar kind are interspersed through the Paradise Lost, and no person of taste and feeling would exchange these delightful morsels for the most elaborate and subtile criticism that human ingenuity could produce. Nor does there

seem any just reason why an epic poet should not be permitted occasionally to digress on subjects endeared to him by suffering and association. The judgment of our immortal bard has been generally allowed to have been keen and accurate, and the result of his attempt is such that he may with propriety be considered as a model in this respect to all future English poets, and as having given additional grace and interest to the fabrics of antiquity.*

Mr. Cumberland has therefore judiciously copied his learned predecessor in this respect, and at the commencement of the fifth book, after an invocation to the Evangelists, thus beautifully alludes to himself:

Musing my pious theme, as fits a bard
Far onward in the wintry track of age,
I shun the Muses haunts, nor dalliance hold
With fancy by the way, but travel on
My mournful road, a pilgrim grey with years;
One that finds little favour with the world,

* Camöens, the Author of the Lusiad, preceded Milton in the adoption of this plan, and with the happiest effect; the most pathetic passages in his poem being those which dwell upon his own severe sufferings, and the unparalleled ill treatment and ingratitude he experienced from his native country.

Yet thankful for it's least benevolence
And patient of its taunts; for never yet
Lur'd I the popular ear with gibing tales,
Or sacrific'd the modesty of song,
Harping lewd madrigals at drunken feasts
To make the vulgar sport and win their shout.
Me rather the still voice delights, the praise
Whisper'd, not publish'd by fame's braying trump:
Be thou my herald, Nature; Let me please
The sacred few, let my remembrance live
Embosom'd by the virtuous and the wise;
Make me, O Heav'n! by those, who love thee, lov'd:
So when the widows and the children's tears
Shall sprinkle the cold dust, in which I sleep
Pompless and from a scornful world withdrawn,
The laurel, which it's malice rent, shall shoot
So water'd into life, and mantling throw
It's verdant honours o'er my grassy tomb.
Here in mid-way of my unfinish'd course
Doubtful of future time whilst now I pause
To fetch new breath and trim my waining lamp,
Fountain of Life, if I have still ador'd
Thy mercy and remember'd Thee with awe
Ev'n in my mirth, in the gay prime of youth—
So conscience witnesses, the mental scribe,
That registers my errors, quits me here—
Propitious Power, support me! and if death,
Near at the farthest, meditates the blow
To cut me short in my prevented task,
Spare me a little, and put by the stroke,

Till I recount his overthrow and hail
Thy Son victorious rising from the grave.

This exquisite digression, pregnant with the most plaintive imagery and sentiment, is a still further proof, if any were wanting, that the licence which Milton took, and which Mr. Cumberland has thus followed, is productive of the most pleasing effect, and unaccompanied with the smallest violence to the narrative, which is immediately resumed in a natural and easy manner.

The trial and condemnation of Christ, the subjects of the fifth book, now take place, but as scripture is here again closely adhered to, it will not be necessary to offer any extracts. It will be sufficient probably to observe that the characters of Christ, Caiphas, Pilate, Peter and Herod are well preserved, and that the sorrow and contrition of the disciple, his soliloquy and supplication for forgiveness, are drawn with great feeling and much felicity of language.

In the beginning of the sixth book, which is allotted to the Crucifixion, Judas mingles with the multitude that throng the Judgment

hall, but endeavours to avoid the eye of our Saviour,

Yet was his ear to all that Jesus spake
Still present, and, though few the words, yet strong
And potent of these few the impressive truth.
There was a magic sweetness in his voice,
A note that seem'd to shiver every nerve
Entwin'd about his heart, though now corrupt,
Debas'd and harden'd. Ill could he abide,
Murderer although he were, the dying tones
Of him, whom he had murder'd; *'Twas the voice*
As of a spirit in the air by night
Heard in the meditation of some crime,
Or sleep-created in the troubled ear
Of conscience, crying out, Beware!

The imagery in the concluding part of this quotation is strikingly illustrative, and superadds that pleasing awe and dread so interesting to a vivid fancy.

On the suicide of Iscariot, which is brought about through the immediate instigation of Mammon, the author expatiates in a vein of pensive morality.

——————————Oh! that my harp
Could sound that happy note, which stirs the string

Responsive, that kind Nature hath entwin'd
About the human heart, and by whose clue
Repentance, heavenly monitress, reclaims
The youthful wanderer from his dangerous maze
To tread her peaceful paths and seek his God:
So could my fervent, my effectual verse
Avail, posterity should then engrave
That verse upon my tomb to tell the world
I did not live in vain. But heedless man,
Deaf to the music of the moral song,
By Mammon or by Belial led from sin
To sin, runs onward in his mad career,
Nor once takes warning of his better guide,
Till at the barrier of life's little span
Arriv'd, he stops: Death opens to his view
A hideous gulph; in vain he looks around
For the lost seraph Hope; beside him stands
The tyrant fiend and urges to the brink;
Behind him black despair with threat'ning frown
And gorgon shield, whose interposed orb
Bars all retreat, and with its shade involves
Life's brighter prospects in one hideous night.

Mammon, in compliance with the request of Satan, having convened the demons in the wilderness, warns them to flight, and relates to them the expulsion of that arch-fiend from the earth; they disperse in terror, and the description of the procession to Mount Calvary next

occurs: on the summit of this hill the poet has artfully placed Gabriel and his attendant angels, and in a passage of great merit delineates the effect of the spectacle on the mind of the indignant Seraph.

———————Here Gabriel from the heighth
Noting the sad procession, had espied
The suffering Son of God amidst the throng
Dragg'd slowly on by rude and ruffian hands
To shameful execution: Horror-struck
Pierc'd to the heart th' indignant Seraph shook
His threat'ning spear, and with the other hand
Smote on his thigh in agony of soul
For man's ingratitude; glist'ning with tears
His eyes, whence late celestial sweetness beam'd,
Now shot a fiery glance.

The picture with which we are next presented glows with tinting of the tenderest and softest beauty, and cannot fail to elicit the tear of pity and compassion from every eye.

Where'er the Saviour pass'd his presence drew
Thousands to gaze; and many an aching heart
Heav'd silent the last tributary sigh
In memory of his mercies; zealous some
Rush'd in the grateful blessing to bestow
For health or limbs or life itself restor'd:

——————————Loud the cry
Of women, whose soft sex to pity prone
Melts at those scenes which flinty-hearted man
Dry-ey'd contemplates: Mothers in their arms
Held up their infants, and with shrill acclaim
Begg'd a last blessing for those innocents,
Whose sweet simplicity so well he lov'd,
And ever as he met them laid his hands
Upon their harmless heads with gentle love
And gracious benediction, breathing heaven
Into their hearts. Oh! happy babes, so blest!

After addressing himself to the Daughters of Jerusalem our Saviour is fixed to the cross.

——————————Now began
The executioners to spread his arms
Upon the beam transverse, and through his palms,
Monsters of cruelty! and through his feet
They drove their spiked nails; whilst at the clang
Of those dire engines every feeling heart
Uttered a groan, that with the mingled shrieks
Of mothers and of children pierc'd the air.
The very soldiers paus'd and stood aghast,
Musing what these lamentings might portend;
Scarce dar'd they to pursue the dreadful work
Awe-struck and gazing on the face divine
Of the suspended Savior.

This last circumstance is well imagined, and gives a very pictoresque finishing to the scene.

The rest of the book being occupied merely with the detail of incidents as related in the Evangelists, viz. the crucifixion of the malefactors, the death of Christ and the resurrection of the saints and prophets, we shall pass on to the subject of the seventh book, the Descent into Hell, which offers a noble theme to our poet and has been treated by him in a manner that does high honour to his genius and taste. Imagination here has free scope, and, borne beyond the limits of the material world, expatiates as in her native clime.

Evening having now succeeded the struggles of nature, the book opens with its description, and represents the dead body of Christ still hanging on the cross. These lines we shall quote for the sake of the three concluding ones which present an image altogether new, and of inimitable beauty.

Now Hesperus renewed his evening lamp:
And hung it forth amid the turbid sky
To mark the close of this portentous day:

The lab'ring sun, in his mid course eclips'd,
Darkling at length had reach'd his western goal;
And now it seem'd as if all Nature slept
O'erspent and wearied with convulsive throes.
Upon his cross the martyr'd Saviour hung;
Pale through the twilight gleam'd his breathless corse
And silvery white, as when the moon-beam plays
On the smooth surface of the glassy lake.

St. John supporting the blessed Virgin is described watching near the cross, and a mournful and pathetic dialogue ensues between them; meanwhile the Spirit of Christ is conveyed on the wings of Cherubim into the regions of Death, whose domains, with a distant view of the bottomless pit, are drawn with a dark but powerful pencil. Here, at the foot of Death's terrific throne, Satan, driven by the whirlwind's rage, had just arrived.

Down on the solid adamant he fell
Precipitate at once, and lay entranc'd
Of arch-angelic majesty the wreck.
Scar'd at the hideous crash and all aghast
Death scream'd amain, then wrapt himself in clouds,
And in his dark pavillion trembling sate
Mantled in night: And now the prostrate fiend
Rear'd his terrific head with lightnings scorch'd
And furrow'd deep with scars of livid hue;

Then stood erect and roll'd his blood-shot eyes
To find the ghastly vision of grim Death,
Who at the sudden downfall of his sire
Startled, and of his own destruction warn'd,
Had shrunk from sight, and to a misty cloud
Dissolv'd hung low'ring o'er his shrouded throne.
When Satan, whose last hope was now at stake,
Impatient for the interview exclaim'd,
Where art thou, Death? Why hide thyself from him,
Of whom thou art? Come forth thou grisly king;
And though to suitor of immortal mould
Thy refuge be denied, yet at my call,
Thy father's call, come forth and comfort me,
Thou gaunt anatomy, with one short glimpse
Of those dry bones, in which alone is peace
And that oblivious sleep, for which I sigh.
He said, and now a deep and hollow groan,
Like roar of distant thunders shook the hall,
And from before the cloud-envelop'd throne
The adamantine pavement burst in twain
With hideous crash self-open'd, and display'd
A subterranean chasm, whose yawning vault,
Deep as the pit of Acheron, forbade
All nearer access to the shadowy king.
Whereat the imprison'd winds, that in its womb
Were cavern'd, 'gan to heave their yeasty waves
In bubbling exhalations, till at once
Their eddying vapors working upwards burst
From the broad vent enfranchis'd, when, behold!

The cloud that late around the throne had pour'd
More than Egyptian darkness, now began
To lift its fleecy skirts, till through the mist
The imperial Phantom gleam'd; monster deform'd,
Enormous, terrible, from heel to scalp
One dire anatomy; his giant bones
Star'd through the shrivell'd skin, that loosely hung
On his sepulchral carcase; round his brows
A cypress wreath tiara-like he wore
With nightshade and cold hemlock intertwin'd;
Behind him hung his quiver'd store of darts
Wing'd with the raven's plume; his fatal bow
Of deadly yew, tall as Goliath's spear,
Propp'd his unerring arm; about his throne
If throne it might be call'd, which was compos'd
Of human bones, as in a charnel pil'd,
A hideous group of dire diseases stood,
Sorrow and pains and agonizing plagues,
His ghastly satelites, and, ev'n than these
More terrible, ambition's slaught'ring sons,
Heroes and conquerors stil'd on earth, but here
Doom'd to ignoble drudgery, employ'd
To do his errands in the loathsome vault
And tend corruption's never-dying worm,
To haunt the catacombs and ransack graves,
Where some late populous city is laid waste
By the destroying pestilence, or storm'd
By murdering Russ or Tartar blood-besmear'd
And furious in the desp'rate breach to plant
His eagle or his crescent on the piles

Of mangled multitudes and flout the sky
With his victorious banners. Now a troop
Of shrowded ghosts upon a signal given
By their terrific Monarch start to sight,
Each with a torch funereal in his grasp,
That o'er the hall diffus'd a dying light,
Than darkness' self more horrible. The walls
Of that vast cenotaph, hung round with spears,
Falchions and pole-axes and plumed helms,
Shew'd like the arm'ry of some warlike state:
There ev'ry mortal weapon might be seen,
Each implement of old or new device,
Which savage nature or inventive art
Furnish'd to arm the ruffian hand of war
And deal to man the life-destroying stroke:
And them betwixt at intervals were plac'd
The crowned skeletons of mighty kings,
Cæsars and Caliphs, and barbarian Chiefs,
Monsters, whose swords had made creation shrink
And frighted peace and science from the earth.

This description of the person and palace of the King of Terrors has many traits of genuine sublimity, though perhaps the obscurity which Milton has thrown around his delineation of Death tends more to excite admiration and terror. The prior half of the quotation will suffer nothing in comparison with any portion of Milton, but the remainder appears too

minute, and though possessing considerable merit, not of sufficient dignity for the occasion. This horrible phantom should ever be circumfused by a gloomy atmosphere through which the eye in vain strives to acquire an accurate knowledge of its object. Placed in the broad blaze of day, its terrors, its sublimity, the product of uncertain imagination, vanish, and deformity alone remains.

A dialogue between Satan and his offspring Death, in which that arch-fiend in vain makes suit for protection, is maintained with characteristic sentiment and imagery, and terminated by the approach of Christ, who, encanopied beneath the wings of Cherubim, and preceded by the angel trump, victoriously appears, whilst darkness sinks to the centre, Death trembles on his throne, and Satan falls motionless on the ground. Our Saviour now addresses and passes sentence on the prostrate demon, and immediately

The strong vindictive Angel, to whose charge
The key of that infernal pit belong,
——seiz'd him in his grasp and from the ground,
Lifting his pond'rous bulk, such vigour dwelt
In arm celestial, headlong down at once

Down hurl'd him to the bottom of the gulph,
Then follow'd on the wing: His yelling cries
Death heard, whilst terror shiver'd every bone.

Meantime the cherubic choir chaunt songs of gratulation and triumph, and hail the day-spring of salvation, whilst Satan

——————ten thousand fathoms deep
At bottom of the pit, a mangled mass
With shatter'd brain and broken limbs outspread,
Lay groaning on the adamantine rock:
Him the strong angel with etherial touch
Made whole in form, but not to strength restor'd,
Rather to pain and the acuter sense
Of shame and torment; hideous was the glare
Of his blood-streaming eyes and loud he yell'd
For very agony, whilst on his limbs
The massy fetters, such as hell alone
Could forge in hottest sulphur, were infix'd
And rivetted in the perpetual stone:
Upon his back he lay extended, huge,
A hideous ruin; not a word vouchsaf'd
That vengeful Angel, but with quick dispatch
Plied his commission'd task, then, stretch'd the wing
And upward flew; for now th' infernal cave
Through all its vast circumference had giv'n
The dreadful warning, and began to close
It's rocky ribs upon th' imprison'd fiend:

Fierce and more fierce as it approach'd became
The flaming concave; thus comprest, the vault
Red as metallic furnace glow'd intense
With heat, that had the hideous den been less
Than adamant it had become a flood,
Or Satan other than he was in sin
And arch-angelic strength pre-eminent,
He neither could have suffer'd nor deserv'd:
Panting he roll'd in streams of scalding sweat,
Parch'd with intolerable thirst, one drop
Of water then to cool his raging tongue,
Had been a boon worth all his golden shrines:
Vain wish! for now the pit had clos'd its mouth,
Nor other light remain'd than what the glare
Of those reverberating fires bestow'd:
Then all the dungeon round was thick beset
With horrid faces, threat'ning as they glar'd
Their haggard eyes upon him; from hell's lake
Flocking they came, whole legions of the damn'd,
His worshippers on earth, sensual, prophane,
Abominable in their lives, monsters of vice,
Blood-stained murderers, apostate kings,
And crowned tyrants some, tormented now
For their past crimes and into furies turn'd
Accusing their betrayer: Curses dire,
Hissings and tauntings now from every side
Assail'd his ear, on him, on him alone,
From Cain first murderer to Iscariot all,
All with loud voices charg'd on him their sins,
Their agonies, with imprecations urg'd

For treble vengeance on his head accurst,
Founder of hell, sole author of their woes,
And enemy avow'd of all mankind.

For perspicuity and strength of imagination, for terrible and gigantic conception, no passage in this or any other poem can be produced in rivalry of the quotation we have now given. The infernal cave closing on its dreadful inhabitant, the tremendous agency of the vindictive Angel, and the ghastly apparitions ranged within the flaming concave, and pouring forth curses on their agonized betrayer, are paintings which display the energy of very powerful and creative genius.

Death, having thus witnessed the punishment and imprisonment of Satan, humbly acknowledges the Messias, and tenders him his crown and key, the latter of which is given to Gabriel by Christ with a commission to set free the Saints of the first resurrection. On the approach of these the book concludes, and the eighth and last opens with a beautiful description of their appearance under the conduct of the Arch-angel.

Now had the Saviour by the word of power
Wafted the magic Phantom into air,
And all the horrors of the scene dispell'd:
Swift as the stroke of his own winged dart,
Or flitting shadows by the moon-beam chas'd,
Death on the instant vanish'd: What had seem'd
A citadel of proud and martial port
With bastions fenc'd and towers impregnable
Of adamant compos'd and lofty dome,
Covering the throne imperial, now was air;
And far as eye could reach, a level plain,
In the interminable horizon lost,
Unfolded it's vast champaign to the view.
Darkness twin-born with Death had fled; the rays,
That from the Saviour's sun-crown'd temples beam'd,
With dazzling lustre brighten'd all the scene.
There just emerging to the distant view,
And glitt'ring white, a multitude appear'd,
Stretch'd east and west in orderly array,
Swift marching underneath the mighty wings
Of the protecting Angel, who in air
Soar'd imminent, and with the broad expanse
From flank to flank envelop'd all the host.

The contrast and rapidity of change between the adamantine citadel and paraphernalia of Death and the immeasurable champaign, and emerging saints, is in the spirit of Arabian fable, and productive of a pleasing effect, whilst

the concluding and noble picture of the mighty Seraph prepares the mind for the solemn subject of the book and harmonises with the immediately succeeding scenery.

Our Saviour having ascended a mountain in the midst of the congregation appears to them clothed with glory, and promises them the joys of a blessed immortality. They adore him in hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and Abraham confers with our Saviour, and is shewn the beatific vision of the heavenly Jerusalem as recorded in the Apocalypse. Christ reascends to earth, and Gabriel explains the purport of the Redeemer's resurrection, and enters into a conference with Moses. The Spirit of God now descends and inspires them with the knowledge necessary to their happy state, whilst a Paradise destined for their abode, until the Lord's return from earth, springs up at the presence of the Deity, and is thus elegantly described:

——————————Over head
Loud thunderings announc'd the coming God:
And now a fire, that cover'd all the mount,
Bespoke him present; all the air respir'd

Ambrosial ordours, amaranth and rose,
For Nature felt her God, and every flower
And every fragrant shrub, whose honied breath
Perfumes the courts of heav'n, had burst to life
Blooming, and, in a thousand colours dy'd,
Threw their gay mantle o'er the naked heath:
Now glow'd the living landscape; hill and dale
Rose on the flat, or sunk as Nature shap'd
Her loveliest forms and swell'd her wavy line,
Leaving unrein'd variety to run
Her wild career amid the sportive scene:
Nor were there wanting trees of ev'ry growth,
Umbrageous some, making a verdant tent
Under their spreading branches, some of shaft
Majestic, tow'ring o'er the subject groves:
Blossoms and fruits and aromatic gums
Scented the breeze, that fann'd their rustling leaves;
And them betwixt a chrystal river flow'd
O'er golden sands, meand'ring in its course
Through amaranthine banks with lulling sound
Of dulcet murmurs breathing soft repose.

And now Gabriel addresses the Saints for the last time assuring them that this Paradise

Is but their passage to a brighter scene,
A resting place till Christ shall re-ascend
To the right hand of God and call them hence
To share his glory in the heav'n of heavens.

He then springs on the wing and with the swiftness of the meteor disappears.

Thus concludes a Poem which for grandeur and sublimity of design and execution will assuredly rank high in the estimation of the critic, and to those who combine religious fervor with poetic enthusiasm afford delight of the most exquisite relish. Though Mr. Cumberland has been compelled in many parts to adhere with scrupulous accuracy to circumstances and events well known, yet has a considerable portion of the work been devoted to the splendor and novelties of fiction, to the delineation of beings beyond the limits of our habitable sphere, and though the author had a model that might guide his efforts, yet were the merits of that model, its sublimity and beauty, so transcendent, that to place by its side a production that would not suffer by the comparison, certainly required the most arduous exertions of genius, the most curious felicities of imitation.

If any general objection can be made, it is, that in the design sufficient compass has not been assumed; that the creations of fancy bear

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not an adequate proportion to the narrative of Scripture, and that consequently the deep solemnity and severe tone of the poem are not fully relieved by the charms of description and the play of imagery. In Milton the beauties of Nature are freely introduced, and dwelt upon, and could Mr. Cumberland have so arranged his plan as to have admitted description of this kind, he would greatly have enhanced its value and the variety of its attraction. As it is, the only piece in the purely descriptive line we can recollect throughout the whole poem is the picture of paradise in the eighth book, and which is finished in a style that induces regret at the poet's inattention to this resource. It is true that in the work as now constituted, owing to its slight digression from the gospel record, such introduction would be impertinent, but had the outline been rendered more extensive, episodical parts must necessarily have been included, and in these the imagery alluded to might judiciously have been employed, and would have operated the effect required. Natural History has lately received so many accessions that the poetic genius who should assiduously cultivate this branch of science, would from

its sources alone be able to throw an interesting novelty over his productions, and the similies of an epic poem would no longer exhibit a tissue of hereditary and servile imagery.

Few literary men of the present day have written upon more various and contrasted subjects than the Author of Calvary, and it will tend strongly to impress upon the public mind a favorable idea of his genius, when it shall reflect, that in the course of four or five years he has presented it with bold and spirited imitations of Milton and Fielding, two authors who have no point in contact, and that his *Calvary* and his *Henry* have the raciness and vigour of originals, and will probably descend to remote ages in conjunction with their prototypes. Should we now advert to his numerous Comedies and Essays, effusions of great and acknowledged merit, it will perhaps not appear too much to affirm, that to no author of the eighteenth century in polite literature are we under greater obligations.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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